

A
GOLDEN TREASURY
FOR
THE CHILDREN OF GOD,

Whose Treasure is in Heaven ;

CONSISTING

Of select Texts of the Bible, with practical Observations in
Prose and Verse, for every Day in the Year.

WRITTEN BY

C. H. v. BOGATZKY.

WITH A

Preface of the Author, on the *right Use* of this Book.

And now for its great Usefulness translated from the 19th Edition
of the German.

Where your Treasure is, there will your heart be also, Mat. vi. 21.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. RICHARDSON, in *Pater-noster-row*, and T. FIELD, the
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C. H. V. C. A. T. K. Y.



Picture of the Author, on the right side of this Book.
And now let its great Blessings be made known to the right
of the German.

London: Printed by J. D. B. O. M. 1791.

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TO THE
READER.



THE translation of this little book having been undertaken by a particular hint of providence, I am not without hopes, that it will meet with a favourable reception from serious readers.

It is not to be expected, that a performance of this nature will suit the taste of those, who unhappily mistake mere outward morality, for true christianity, and go no further than natural reason and strength will carry them: But such as either have, or desire to have a real experience of the kingdom of God in their souls, will find much in it to the awakening, comforting and encouraging their heart in the right way.

The author very properly calls it a GOLDEN TREASURY for the children of God, who esteem the word of God more than gold and much fine gold, from which they may be daily supplied with proper advice and relief in all manner of spiritual necessities, as thousands have happily experienced already.

The frequent use of this book, among the children of God abroad, manifestly appears, from the many impressions it has undergone; it being 20 times reprinted since the first publication.

In translating it, great care was taken never to deviate from the true and genuine sense of the author, tho' it was not possible always to keep his expressions; the different idioms of the languages sometimes requiring a short paraphrase, to make the sense plain and easy in the English.

And to bring it also in the poetical part to as near a resemblance to the originul as possible, the best expedient seemed, to have recourse to the excellent hymns and psalms of the late reverend and worthy D. WATTS, which furnished me with a variety of elegant and edifying verses on most of the subjects. These being properly chosen, are, in my humble opinion,

no disgrace to the Author's performance, and make the fullest compensation for his thoughts, I could think of.

May the Lord in his infinite goodness, be pleased to bless these endeavours to the glory of his name and the good of many souls, is the earnest desire and prayer of the

TRANSLATOR.

6 JU 62

P R E-



P R E F A C E

CONCERNING THE
RIGHT USE OF THIS DIVINE
TREASURY.

AS the Lord has been pleased signally to bless this little book to many souls, it has been a decisive encouragement to this further edition of it. But as this, like other extracts from Scripture, is liable to abuses, it has been conceived proper

per to take all possible measures against such evils, and direct the unexperienced reader to a right use of it. First it is to be noticed, of which, indeed, every intelligent person will be aware, that this piece is not a matter of light amusement or calculated for the gratification of mere curiosity; no, the scope of it is, in a regular and perspicuous manner to lead the supine world into spirituality, to enlarge their views of many edifying truths, and especially, as far as can be, to detach them from their low puerile and unworthy usages; the inculcating such admonitions has been thought peculiarly necessary to the too numerous tribe of sensual trifling christians: therefore some reflections to this purpose have been added in the fifteenth and this edition. Should any who are still in love with the world, vouchsafe to cast an eye on this work, I assure them it will turn to quite another advantage than wasting their time in gaming or dancing, in futile jests or ill-natured censures on others, or the like amusements, this short and precious time not being bestowed on them for such levities, but for a steady preparation for

for eternity, and of which they are to give a most strict account. They are at the same time candidly warned not to think of making a play-thing of this work, but that they labour to improve it to their effectual conversion and amendment. If any expressions touch them to the quick, if they see themselves any where drawn in their proper colours, let them not slight these as chance and accident, but be firmly persuaded that in these the Lord knocks at their hearts and calls them to repentance: To this blessed call, let them immediately attend and yield themselves to be drawn from the world to God by this gentle cord of love, as more eligib'e than to be compelled by bit and scourge: but if they meet with nothing here but words of comfort and confidence, let them beware of fostering a false consolation by precipitately embracing them, the safe way is to be moved by them to repentance, imploring God that he would give them an humiliating insight into all their sins, and especially their grievous depravation by original sin, and a broken, contrite and penitent heart, and implant in them that
lively

lively faith, by which love works and which overcomes the world. As they grow in faith and repentance they become sensible of the power and sweetness of the gospel, and may solace and strengthen themselves in the glorious comforts thereof, all the evangelical promises of grace being the portion only of the penitent and mortified, the obdurate, the proud, the sensual have not the least share in them. As to the children of God, to them this book is peculiarly adapted, they, remaining in meekness and simplicity, know by their own and the experiences of others that their indulgent father, according to his tender mercies, suits himself to our imbecillity, and thus, not unfrequently applies to our hearts words of strength and exhortation exactly corresponding with our circumstances, and thus makes our darkness to be light and our meekness strength; these, therefore, are secure from perverting the texts to any pernicious abuse, being divinely taught to improve all to their real edification; these, in all circumstances and accidents, in their going out and coming in, their rising up and
 lying

lying down, and still more remarkably when they are at a stand how or for what they shall pray, find matter to enliven them, and form a prayer of the contents of these discourses, also from hence have subjects always ready for godly conference with others, thus excluding all frothy words or idle deportment. Do they light upon any sharp sayings of the law, these serve for their examination and trial, they particularly turn them to this inestimable benefit, that seeing in them as in a looking-glass their defects and guiltiness, they are the more convinced of their need of the gospel promises and run with more eager pantings and love to the precious blood of the dear lamb of God, which was shed on the cross, the only fountain against all sin and uncleanness, to wash their robes white in that inestimable propitiation: this is the most happy employment and herein should we be daily and hourly employed, as still the motions of sin are felt in us, hereby, the peace of God which dwells only with a childlike flexible temper, and that true godliness which issues from faith are best promoted. In
for

order to their further edification, they will do well, in turning to their Bibles for the texts, comparing their harmony, and weighing and digesting the parallel-places which are here and there added.

May the Lord our God who at the building of the material temple of Jerusalem did not despise the least service or contribution, graciously accept in Christ of this feeble labour of love towards building up his spiritual temple, and continue still to bless it richly in the further edification of more souls to the glory of his name, and for the sake of his eternal love. Amen.

Halle, 4 July, 1746.

1 Jan.

(1)

A ARON shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breast-plate of judgment, upon his heart, when he goeth into the holy place for a memorial before the Lord continually, and thou shalt put into the breast-plate of judgment the urim and thummim, namely, light and integrity. *Exod. xxviii. 29.*

Now am I for ever in gracious remembrance with God, since my great high-priest and advocate *Christ Jesus* bears my name continually before him, on his heart. Whenever I am troubled about my sins, his powerful mediation will surely plead mercy for all my transgressions, and supply my wants abundantly. God not denying him any thing, I can thro' him continually be heard and obtain grace; for he makes perpetual intercession for me in heaven, by which all my prayers at all times, and even now, are sanctified and presented to the Father, who heareth him always. O! who would not often send up his petitions to heaven in faith!

Now may our joyful tongues
Our Maker's honour sing:
Jesus the Priest receives our songs,
And bears them to the King.
Before his Father's eye
Our humble suit he moves;

The Father lays his thunder by,
And looks, and smiles, and loves.
No fiery vengeance now,
No burning wrath comes down,
If justice calls for sinners blood,
The Saviour shows his own.

A

2 Jan.

(2)

I Will ransom them from the power of the grave : I will redeem them from death : O Death, I will be thy plague ; O Grave, I will be thy destruction, Hof. xiii. 14. Christ having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it, Col. ii. 15.

The world is *afraid of a hidden poison* where there is none. The real hidden poison is sin, which the Lord grant me to fear every where ; for it has infected all things and all places. But, O my dear Saviour, thou being my all-sufficient Preservative and Antidote in all places, O ! dwell in me continually, and increase thou my faith, that I may know thee and enjoy thee more and more. Take away all fear of death, since thou the Prince of life livest in me, and hast totally destroyed both death and hell.

HOSANNAH to the Prince of light,
That cloth'd himself in clay ;
Enter'd the iron gates of death,
And tore the bars away.
Death is no more the king of dread,
Since our EMANUEL rose ;

He took the tyrant's sting away,
And spoil'd our hellish foes.
Now holy triumphs of the soul
Shall death itself out-brave,
Leave dull mortality behind,
And fly beyond the grave.

3 Jan.

(3)

BUT now, O Lord, thou art our Father : *We are the clay, and thou our potter, and we all are the work of thy hand.* Isaiah, lxiv. 8.

Being only thy clay, O Almighty Potter, as I must not, and will not resist thy workings by any means, I assuredly believe that thou wilt prepare and perfect me for a meet vessel of grace, in spite of a thousand hindrances. No work of thine comes ever short of its intended perfection : For who can stay thy hand ? It is thy own saying ; I will work, and who shall let it ? *Isaiab* xliii. 13.

An Artist delights in his own workmanship, and would not leave one single flaw or defect in it designedly, *Phil.* i. 6. O ! then look upon me too, thou wise Creator ; see how flesh and blood disorders my poor soul ; and deliver me from all that may endanger my spiritual life. Knowing thou canst do no less than an human artist, who is ever ready and exerts his skill to mend and perfect his work ; I trust that thou wilt not always suffer these impediments to hinder and disgrace thy work. Nay, such is thy wisdom and power, that out of darkness thou canst bring light, out of sickness health ; and tho' I am now destitute of strength and life ; yet I believe thy work will be finished at last, and glorify the name of its maker. *1 Per.* v. 10.

4 Jan.

(4)

O That the Salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the Lord brings back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad, Psal. xiv. 7. Divine answer. If the Son make you free, then you are free indeed. John viii. 36. See also verses 31, 32.

Not as if sin should be utterly destroyed, or intirely dead, and could not stir any more in the heart of believers. For the scripture speaks of them as having still the lusts and motions of sin. *Gal. v. 13.* But it imports only, that it has no power either to condemn, or to reign over us, nay it shall be weaken'd more and more. *Rom. vi. 12, 14.* So that Christ reigns in the heart even where sin dwells, in the midst of his enemies; and it is a dangerous error indeed to believe that sin is destroyed to the root. If it were so, whence these frequent expressions and exhortations, to crucify, withstand, and rule over it? *Gal. v. 24.*

Now sits our Saviour on his throne,
With pity in his eyes:
He hears the dying prisoners groans,
And sees their sighs arise.
He frees the souls condemn'd to death;
And when his saints complain,

It shan't be said, that praying breath
Was ever spent in vain.
This shall be known when we are dead,
And left on long record,
That ages yet unborn may read,
And trust and praise the Lord.

5 Jan.

(5)

ALL that will live godly, Note, in Christ Jesus: (for bare morality the world likes well enough :) shall suffer persecution, 2 Tim. iii. 12. The world hates them, because they are not of the world. John xvii. 14.

The children of God do not love and please the world, and are oftentimes greatly afflicted on account of the abounding wickedness, and particularly the profanation of the Lord's name. Now when you can like the world, and the world can like you, there must be much worldliness in you: for the world loves its own.

Many pretend to be christians, but they will not endure persecution. Instead of this, they blame others for too much rashness, and not acting prudently enough, to avoid the mockings and hatred of the world. Therefore they propose to take wiser measures; and to do more good, take great care not to be despised and rejected. But under this pretence of wisdom and prudence, very often lies concealed a most abominable love and fear of men. Be thou nobler-minded, live as a christian indeed, and be not ashamed to bear the cross of Christ. The disciple is not above his master. Has eternal love, wisdom, and power, endured the contradiction and reproach of sinners? Thou shouldst be wiser than him indeed, if thou couldst escape the reproach and hatred of the world.

May but his grace my soul renew,
Let sinners gaze and hate me too!

The Word that saves me does engage
A sure defence from all their rage.

6 Jan.

(6)

ALL things are possible to him that believeth. Mark ix. 23.

Faith is the most essential part, the eye and the very light of the eye in the christian religion ; the whole turns upon that. As our faith is, so is our strength and fruitfulness in good works. But at the same time there is nothing more out of our own power than to believe, even after the work of grace has been actually wrought in our hearts. Therefore nothing more needful than to pray for faith as long as we live. May the Lord give and increase it continually !

Nothing can be stronger in the universe than the hand of faith. By this we lay sure hold on our most glorious and almighty Lord in heaven, and such an inviolable union is established between Christ and a believing soul, that none can separate the one from the other, all the powers of hell and sin avail nothing against it. Faith breaks through the greatest obstacles, removes mountains of difficulties, and has, as it were, a kind of omnipotence in it. For this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. JOHN v. 4. Nay, it even wrestles with God and prevails, GEN. xxxii. 28. As straw cannot withstand the force of fire ; so God being a wall of fire around his people, the greatest power of our mighty enemies shall be consumed, like the stubble. O ! then look upon him stedfastly, my soul, and believe in him with a simple heart. Wondrous are his ways with his people, and past finding out ; but at last all their sorrows and strife, by the management of his infinite wisdom, must come to a glorious and triumphant end.

7 Jan.

(7)

CHRIST is all in all, Col. iii. 2.

For a believer to receive and know Christ as his all, is the only means to live truly a life of faith; and when he has done this, it will not be hard to resign all other things. To talk much of Christ, and make frequent use of his name one to another, is commendable, if the heart goes along with the words; but to call upon God the Father with a filial confidence, is also our duty, and does not contradict the apostle's meaning at all, for it is only through Christ we can do it; and, as he says himself, the Father and he are one. Thou art my all, O gracious Lord! what then can I want? I desire no more than to be put always in mind of this by the animating voice of thy Spirit.

My Lord, my life, my love,
To thee, to thee I call;
I cannot live, if thou remove,
For thou art all in all.
Thy shining grace can cheer
This dungeon where I dwell:
Tis paradise when thou art here;
If thou depart, 'tis hell.
The smileings of thy face,
How amiable they are!

'Tis heav'n to rest in thine embrace,
And no where else but there.
Nor earth, nor all the sky,
Can one delight afford;
No, not a drop of real joy,
Without thy presence, Lord.
To thee my spirits fly
With infinite desire:
And yet, how far from thee I lie!
Dear Jesus raise me higher.

8 Jan.

(8)

*W*hatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to Gsd, and the Father by him, Col. iii. 17. Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. 1 Cor. x. 31.

Who enough considers these words in all his actions, and remembers, especially when he sits down at this table, that it is written for our admonition; *The idolatrous Israelites sat down to eat and drink, and immediately rose up to play.* Is it not matter of lamentation, that in these our happy and enlighten'd times, even the ministers of Christ should connive at, approve of, and indulge themselves or their own household in the excesses of the age? must not this be a stumbling-block both to the children of God, and the children of this world.

It highly concerns you, O ye vain and worldly people, to try your works by the touch-stone of these words. Judge ye yourselves, whether your dancings, plays, sports, and other darling pleasures, can be done in the name of our Lord Jesus, Christ, and to the glory of God? Pray consider it in Time, how you will answer for these things before the judge of heaven and earth.

But examine yourselves also, all ye that profess religion, whether ye have truly acted up to this rule? Have all your doings been, and are they still to the glory of God alone? For by this test all your words and works are to be tried, and whatsoever does not tend to honour God, is worse than vanity.

Jan. 9.

(9)

ALL that the Father giveth unto me, shall come to me: and him that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out. And this is the Father's will, which has sent me, that of all which he has given me, I should lose nothing.
John vi. 37. 39.

O my dear Saviour, I am also given unto thee, from thy Father ; for so ! I come to thee. Consequently I cannot be lost nor cast out by thee, because thou art come to save, and not to condemn and reject, even the most wicked and hardened Sinners. For If they are lost, it is not for being rejected by thee, but for rejecting thee : much less wilt thou reject him that believes in thee, though it be but faintly.

Not to condemn the sons of men
Did Christ the Son of God appear ;
No weapons in his hands are seen,
No flaming sword, nor thunder there.
Such was the pity of our God,
He lov'd the race of men so well,
He sent his Son to bear our load
Of sins, and save our souls from hell.

Sinners believe the Saviour's word,
Trust in his mighty name, and live ;
A thousand joys his lips afford,
His hands a thousand blessings give.
But vengeance and damnation lies
On rebels who refuse the grace ;
Who God's eternal Son despise,
The hottest hell shall be their place.

10 Jan.

(10)

L E T every thing that has breath praise the Lord, Psal. cl. 6.

Hypocrites praise the Lord when all goes well with them ; but true christians do it even in adversity ; nay, when they are most humbled under afflictions, they most acknowledge themselves unworthy even of the least of God's mercies, and praise him the more for every thing. Hence is it that good old Baruch says, Chap. ii. 18. " But the soul " that is greatly vexed, which goeth stooping and feeble, and the eyes " that fail, and the hungry soul will give thee praise and righteousness, O " Lord.

Nature with all her pow'rs shall sing,
God the Creator and the King:
Nor air, nor earth, nor skies, nor seas,
Deny the tribute of their praise.
Begin to make his glories known,
Ye seraphs that sit near his throne ;
Tune your harps high, and spread the sound
To the creation's utmost bound.

All mortal things of meaner frame,
Exert your force and own his name ;
Whilst with our souls and with our voice
We sing his honours and our joys.
To him be sacred all we have,
From the young cradle to the grave:
Our lips shall his loud wonders tell,
And ev'ry word a miracle.

11 Jan.

(11)

FOR God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believes on him is not condemned.
John iii. 16, 17, 18.

Oh that these truly precious words were ever warmly impress'd on our hearts; that they were our last thoughts at night, and the first at our awaking in the morning; and that by this means they were improved in such a manner, as to make our dying bed easy in the evening of our life, and to insure our rising with gladness in the morning of the resurrection. And what more blessed and delightful meditations can I daily dwell upon, than to think thus: God has loved me, even me, when I was his enemy, and so loved me, that he gave me his only Son. Now he is mine indeed, and all things are mine. 1 COR. iii. 21. For he has not spared his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; and, being thus reconciled to him, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? ROM. viii. 32. He will never suffer me to perish. He passed his word for it. It is he that says that "I shall not perish; I shall not be condemned", but have everlasting life, if I believe. This will I build and depend upon to my last moments, as upon an unmoveable rock. Amen, and Amen.

O! for this love let earth and skies
With hallelujahs ring;

And the full choir of human tongues
All hallelujahs sing.

12 Jan.

(12)

IN *Christ we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Col. i. 14. Having forgiven you all trespasses. Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross. Col. ii. 13, 14. Therefore, said he, it is finished. John xix. 30.*

Then all the daily transgressions and infirmities of believers, says a certain good writer, are already forgiven through Christ; the whole sum of them having been paid at once, and whole Christ, with all his merits, having been applied to us, for our justification: his merits not only extend to our past, but even to our present and future sins. Hence we are daily justified, as long as we believe in Christ, and for this reason may have great assurance and confidence towards God through him.

Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.

But Christ, the heavenly lamb,
Takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of nobler name,
And richer blood than they,

My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

My soul looks back to see
The burdens thou didst bear,
When hanging on the cursed tree,
And hopes her guilt was there.

13 Jan.

(13)

KEEP me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings:
Psal. xvii. 3. Divine answer. *He shall cover thee with his feathers,
and under his wings shalt thou trust, his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.*
Psal. xci. 4.

There is none, O Lord! that has more need continually to keep close to thee in prayer and faith; and at the same time none is more unable to do it, than I the least of all thy flock. O! that thou would'st be graciously pleased to incline and enable me to this blessed work; and grant that thy good spirit, according to his own pleasure, may never suffer me to be faint and backward in the same. For as much as I truly rest by faith, under the wings of thy grace, I am sure of defence, power, and comfort: but as soon as I wander from thee, I am in danger of losing these privileges and falling away.

He that has made his refuge God,
Shall find a most secure abode;
Shall walk all day beneath his shade,
And there at night shall rest his head.
Just as a hen protects her brood
From birds of prey that seek their blood,
Under her feathers, so the Lord
Makes his own arm his peoples guard.

Thrice happy man! thy maker's care
Shall keep thee from the fowler's snare,
Satan the fowler who betrays
Unguarded souls a thousand ways.
What tho' a thousand at thy side,
At thy right hand ten thousand dy'd,
Thy God his chosen people saves
Amongst the dead, amidst the grave.

14 Jan.

(14)

S E T *thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live.* 2 Kings xx. 1.
*So teach us, O Lord, to number our days, that we may apply our hearts
to wisdom.* Psal. xc. 12.

Such as live not outwardly in open sins, tho' they do not deny themselves, and the world; but conform in many things to the ungodly customs and practices of this age, are very often reckon'd to be good sober christians, and perhaps much applauded for their wisdom and discretion, in steering a middle course, and keeping clear of the dangerous extremes of the loose or profane, and the superstitious or hypocritical enthusiasts, who in their ignorance and folly pretend to tax every innocent diversion with sin: but this their wisdom will certainly prove folly in the hour of death. What profit can they reap then from the time that has been spent in dancing, gaming, and other worldly amusements and pleasures!

My soul, come meditate the day,
And think how near it stands,
When thou must quit this house of clay,
And fly to unknown lands.
And you mine eyes, look down and view,
The hollow gaping tomb;

This gloomy prison waits for you,
Whene'er the summons come.
Oh! could we die with those that die,
And place us in their stead;
Then would our spirits learn to fly,
And converse with the dead.

15 Jan.

(15)

PRAY without ceasing. 1 Thess. v. 17.

If we have not grace enough, it is because we do not pray enough. For most true it is, we need not strive to move God to compassion, and extort, as it were, the blessings from him, by our prayers. Very far from it. He is every minute communicating himself to us; in every word he holds forth Christ and every good thing to us: But we must always have a soul hungring after Christ, and by incessant prayer stretch out the hand of faith to receive him. This is chiefly to be understood of the inward desires and groanings of our Spirit; but we must not omit to pour out our supplications daily, as oft as we can, by words, else our secret mental prayers at last may become so secret, as to cease perhaps entirely.

Father in the mighty name
Of thy well-beloved Son,
One of all thy gifts I claim,
All my wants I speak in one,
Let me for the promise stay,
Only give me power to pray.

Grant me comfort, or deny,
Visit, or from me depart,
Only let thy Spirit cry
Abba Father in my heart;
Abba Father would I say,
Only give me power to pray.

16 Jan.

(16)

ABIDE in me. John xv. 4. *Lord to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life.* John vi. 68. *For, it is good for me to draw near to God. I have put my trust in the Lord God.* Psalm lxxiii. 28.

To abide in Christ, who is our righteousness and strength, and not to be moved from him, is the very life and power of christianity ; for to know him to be our righteousness, brings peace and joy ; which joy in the Lord is certainly follow'd with strength, to overcome sin and the world, which believers renounce the more readily, as they have found something better in Christ. May the Lord give me grace likewise immoveably to abide in him.

Christ is my light, my life, my care,
My blessed hope, my heav'nly prize ;
Dearer than all my passions are,
My limbs, my bowels, or my eyes.
The strings that twine about my heart,
Tortures and racks may tear them off ;
But they can never, never part,
With their dear hold of Christ my love,

My God ! and can a humble child,
That loves thee with a flame so high,
Be ever from thy face exil'd,
Without the pity of thine eye !
Impossible ! for thine own hands
Have ty'd my heart so fast to thee,
And in thy book the promise stands,
That where thou art, thy friends must be

17 Jan.

(17)

CHRIST has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Gal. iii. 13, 14.

The spirit of sanctification is the gift of Christ. Consequently there is a great difference between moral actions done by our own strength, and true sanctification of the Spirit. The latter cannot take place before the soul truly receives Christ, and abides in him as its only propitiation, righteousness, and peace; for he being first made to us of God, our righteousness will then be made our sanctification likewise, 1 Cor. i. 30. And the kingdom, work, and image of God will go on best when we trust least to our own strength; sanctification is now become a more easy task, and we need not be compelled to it by the terrors of the law, since Christ lives and works in us, and we in a child-like temper live henceforth to him who died for us.

The law commands and makes us know
What duties to our God we owe;
That 'tis the gospel must reveal
Where lies our strength to do his will.

The law discovers guilt and sin,
And shews how vile our hearts have been:
Only the gospel can express
Forgiving love, and cleansing grace.

B

18 Jan.

(18)

CHRIST is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes. Rom. x. 4.

When the law, by its spirituality, has condemned all our works and doings, convinced us of our weakness, and slain us, it has done its work, and has no further business, but to be our schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ; and being in him, the law has no demands upon us any more, since we have an abundant righteousness, beyond all that can be required by the law, even the righteousness of God himself.

Lord, when my thoughts with wonder roll
O'er the sharp sorrows of my soul,
And read my Maker's broken laws,
Repair'd and honour'd by thy cross;
When I behold death, hell and sin,
Vanquish'd by that dear blood of thine,
And see the man that groan'd and dy'd
Sit glorious by his Father's side;

My passions rise and soar above,
I'm wing'd with faith, and fir'd with love,
Fain would I reach eternal things
And learn the notes that GABRIEL sings
But my heart fails, my tongue complains,
For want of their immortal strains;
And in such humble notes as these
Must fall below thy victories.

19 Jan.

(19)

BUT the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto Noah into the ark. Then he put forth his hand and took her, and pulled her in to him into the ark. Gen. viii. 9.

Many, on their first awakening from sin, apply themselves to very hard works and rigorous duties, thereby expecting to find rest for their wounded consciences. But, tho' the right and diligent use of all the means of grace is absolutely required, yet great care must be taken not to quiet ourselves by that only. We should not place any confidence at all in our own doings, but only look for rest thro' the work of the redemption, and the blood of Christ. To know ourselves entirely justified by him, would soon fill our hearts with peace, nay, encourage and enable us to do good works. 2 Chron. xvii, 6.

In vain the trembling conscience seeks
Some solid ground for rest,
With long despair the spirit breaks,
'Till we apply to Christ.
Just as we see the lonesome dove
Bemoan her widow'd state,
Wand'ring, she flies thro' all the grove,
And mourns her loving mate,

B 2

Just so our thoughts from thing to thing,
In restless circles rove;
Just so we droop and hang the wing,
When Jesus hides his love.
While Jesus shines with quick'ning grace,
We sing and mount on high;
But if a frown becloud his face,
We faint, and tire, and die.

20 Jan.

(20)

BY this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. John xiii. 35. Forbearing one another in love. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath; but be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. Eph. iv. 2, 3, 26, 32.

Humble christians never affect singularity, nor pretend to have the preference one of another; they rather study to be of one mind, strive not about words, lest the general harmony subsisting between them and the edification of souls, should be hindered. Whoever judges and blames every thing, and can never agree in words and notions, or join in devotion with other experienced christians, is puffed up with self-conceit, and will certainly make a dangerous shipwreck; for pride comes before a fall.

Not diff'rent food, or diff'rent dress,
Compose the kingdoms of our Lord,
But peace, and joy, and righteousness,
Faith and obedience to his word.
When weaker christians we despise,
We do the gospel mighty wrong;

For God the gracious and the wise,
Receives the feeble with the strong.
Let pride and wrath be banish'd hence,
Meekness and love our souls pursue:
Nor shall our practice give offence
To saints, the gentile, or the jew.

21 Jan.

(21)

WHILE the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. Matt.
xxy. 5. O that I may be roused out of my slumber, and be watch-
ful, and ready against the coming of my bridegroom.

How many are there that set out in good earnest in their way to heavens
and run well for some time, but at last are lulled to rest, and intan-
gled again with a false notion of liberty! even the wise virgins fell
asleep. Let this be a warning to me, O Lord! set thou a guard be-
fore my eyes, ears, and other faculties, lest the world should enter
again through these avenues of the heart, if the spark be not speedily
extinguish'd, it will soon break out into a flame: thus sin is of a pro-
gressive nature, and its venom spreads quickly and very wide, unless
it be stop'd and opposed in time. Watch therefore over that unsteady
heart of mine, O thou keeper of *Israel*! that as soon as it begins to
wander from thee, I may be alarmed to flee from sin as from a
serpent. Give me grace to look upon every hour as my last, so that
being ever wisely upon my guard, I may meet thee with joy, when
my time is run out, whenever it shall please thee to call me hence.

The fearful soul that tires and faints,
And walks the ways of God no more,
but esteem'd almost a saint,
And makes his own destruction sure.

Lord, let not all my hopes be vain:
Create my heart entirely new;
Which hypocrites could ne'er attain,
Which false apostates never knew.

B 3

22 Jan.

(22)

*B*UT while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat.
Matt. xiii. 25.

No wonder that christians lose their power and strength, if the enemy of souls find them asleep. How soon may he gain an advantage from without, if a strict guard is not kept within ! tho' satan seems to sleep sometimes, and we should by all appearance be in no great danger, it is only his stratagem to make us careless. He never fails to be vigilant, and watch his opportunity that he may offer us battle with advantage ; and who knows but he may gain the victory by those very sins, to which perhaps we, for many years, had hardly any temptation. O ! how cunningly does he work ! how enticing is the world ? even in lawful things very often, the most dangerous snares lie hidden. A single word that we hear may be able to disturb our peace. One unguarded look is sometimes enough to infatuate our hearts. There is danger on all sides. Unless the Lord opens our eyes and preserves us on all occasions, each of us, even the best, may still be overcome, and deadly hurt by sin and the world. Satan is particularly busy to sift the godly most of all, and having catch'd them in his net, triumphs exceedingly over them.

O Lord suffer me never to fall asleep again !

23 Jan.

(23)

WH E R E F O R E in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. Heb. ii. 17. Therefore because he continues ever, he has an unchangeable priesthood, wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them. Ch. vii. 24, 25.

If we have really experienced in our hearts that Christ is our brother, it will be such an exceeding great thing to us, that we shall be constrained rather to be silent upon, than to talk much of it. Such as only cry out, and make the greatest noise, have very often the least experience of it.

Luther on these words says, Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and so for mine too. His continual intercession abolishes all charges against me, old and new, he being able to save to the uttermost, and living FOR EVER. This is by him very emphatically repeated again. As long therefore as this lasteth, his Salvation lasteth also, and will be EVER ready and able to take away my sins, and accomplish my eternal happiness, in spite of all obstacles and hindrances.

Jesus, the king of glory, reigns

On Sion's heavenly hill;

Looks like a lamb, that has been slain,

And wears his priesthood still,

He ever lives to intercede

Before his Father's face:

Give him my soul, thy cause to plead,

Nor doubt the Father's grace.

B 4

24 Jan.

(24)

HEREIN is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. We love him, because he first loved us. 1 John iv. 10, 19. He that loves me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him. We will come unto him, and make our abode with him. John xiv. 21, 23.

O what a glorious promise, what manner of love is this! Lord, I would not exchange my cross and sufferings, much less thy love, for the love and honours of the world. Only make it more known to me, how great thy love is, and how much thou hast forgiven me, that I may love thee much again, and be thereby still better purged from the inordinate love of temporal things. It is my earnest desire that the gates of my heart should be open to none but to thee, that thou alone may dwell in me. Shed thy love abroad in my heart, quicken and renew all the faculties of mind and body, and work every thing in and for me.

O! for this love, let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break;
And all harmonious human tongues
The Saviour's praises speak.
Yes, we will praise thee, dearest Lord,
Our souls are all on flame;

Hosannah round the spacious earth
To thine adored name.
Angels assist our mighty joys,
Strike all your harps of gold;
But when you raise your highest notes,
His love can ne'er be told.

25 Jan.

(25)

WHEREFORE we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. 2 Cor. v. 9.

This indeed is the true disposition of a soul espoused to Christ. She has but one care, which is to please him in all things. And this desire to do his will is as it were the ring and the seal of her bridegroom, which she may look upon even in the absence of all spiritual joy, as a token for good, that she is his spouse.

Ought not then this day, O my soul, to be a new wedding-day with Christ? He is desirous that thou should'st be betroth'd unto him, even now, and waits only for thy consent. Harken, O daughter, consider and incline thine ear; be no longer married to the world. Forget thy own people and thy father's house, and take him alone for thy husband; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty. Wilt thou give the refusal to this glorious and loving Saviour? I hope not. Give it rather to the world, and resolutely say, It is enough, I have done with thee, O poor world! I break the bands of my former love; my eyes and my feet shall henceforth only be directed to the blessed and eternal city of the new Jerusalem, where my heavenly bridegroom resides. And O what need have I to be daily prepared, dressed and beautified, against his coming, and the time of his taking me home to himself! Far be it from me to please the world any longer. No, no, but since I am betroth'd, and have given myself in marriage to Christ, I will love him alone, and be true to him, whilst any drop of blood flows in my veins. Amen.

26 Jan.

(26)

LET us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Heb. iv. 16.

O that we were all so wise as to prepare and provide ourselves in due time with the right armour of faith, before the time of need and hour of death approach. Come, my reader, let us begin now, directly, to lay in a good stock of grace by continual prayer, lest we should come too late and be undone. Behold the encouragement of Christ. I am the door, says he, and the way. *John* x. i. Chap. xiv. 6. Now by this door you may find the entrance into the heart and favour of God, Christ himself sitting on a mercy seat to receive and welcome the vilest of sinners. And there is no drawing near to God but thro' him, and clothed in the robes of the righteousness of our only Redeemer, Mediator and Advocate. He is Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, nay the very All in all believers. With Christ they never can part; and he can never part with them.

Now we may bow before his feet,
And venture near the Lord;
No fiery cherub guards his seat,
Nor double-flaming sword.
Once 'twas a seat of dreadful wrath,
And shot devouring flame;

Our God appear'd consuming fire,
And vengeance was his name.
Rich were the drops of Jesus' blood
That calm'd his frowning face,
That sprinkled o'er the burning throne,
And turn'd the wrath to grace.

27 Jan.

(27)

GOD commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Much more then being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath thro' him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God, by the death of his son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. Rom. v. 8, 9, 10.

Here we have much more reason to cry out than *Moses*. Deut. xxxiii. 3. The Lord loved the people. But here I must beseech thee too, O Lord! that this infinite gift of thy Son may appear to me greater and greater every day, and that thy love shining out in his redemption may go on so to increase in my soul, as to disperse all clouds of darkness, unbelief, and hard thoughts of thy goodness. Whenever this slanderous spirit tries to lift up his head, grant that my faith and love may be quickened and strengthened in such a manner, as heartily to praise thy great love in spite of all his suggestions. This is the chief desire which I offer unto thee in all my prayers, night and day. The want of faith and love, I am sensible, is still my greatest want: My soul is like a large empty vessel; but I pray thee to fill it speedily, notwithstanding any opposition that may be made by my unrenewed part.

So strange, so boundless was the love
That pity'd dying men,
The Father sent his equal Son
To give them life again.

Thy hands, dear Jesus, were not arm'd
With a revenging rod,
No had commission to perform
The vengeance of a God.

28 Jan.

(28)

THE combat of the flesh and the spirit. *Gal. v. 17. The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh ; and these are contrary the one to the other ; so that you cannot do the things that you would.*

Faith only puts an end to that lifeless, faint, and unprofitable conflict under the law ; not of the combat between the flesh and the spirit. The last rather begins on our believing in Christ ; for till then we have not the Spirit of God, which is only given by the gospel.

What diff'rent pow'rs of grace and sin
Attend our mortal state?

I hate the thoughts that work within,
And do the works I hate.

Now I complain, and groan and die,
While sin and satan reign :

Now raise my songs of triumph high,
For grace prevails again.

So darkness struggles with the light,

"Till perfect day arise ;

Water and fire maintain the fight,
Until the weaker dies.

Thus will the flesh and spirit strive,
And vex and break my peace ;

But I shall quit this mortal life,
And sin for ever cease.

29 Jan.

(29)

THE prosperity of fools (the wicked) shall destroy them, but whose hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil, Prov. i. 32, 33. The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that fear the Lord shall not want any good thing, Ps. xxxiv, 11. For godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, 1 Tim. iv. 8.

Even the rich ones suffer want. whereas a true believer always has enough, and is equally rich and contented at all times. The all-sufficient hand of God, who supplies all creatures, and is never shortened, is his never-failing treasure. And besides, having Christ, who is his All, what can he want? In darkness and ignorance he is his counsellor, in weakness his strength. Whatever he denies him, either is not good for him, or at least not at this time. And thus all things, even wants, are a real gain and blessing to him, for they serve, and are intended to keep him humble, to make him better acquainted with the word of God, and excite him to be more zealous in prayer.

Now I shall envy them no more
Who grow prophanely great.
Tho' they increase their golden store,
And rise to wond'rous height.
They taste of all the joys that grow
Upon this earthly clod!

Well, they may search the creatures thro',
For they have ne'er a God.
Shake off the thoughts of dying too,
And think your life your own;
But death comes hast'ning on to you,
To mow your glory down.

30 Jan.

(30)

ALL these things have I kept from my youth up, Matt. xix. 20. They return, but not to the most high, they are like a deceitful bow, Hof. vii. 16.

To part with one's most secret bosom sin and darling lust, is true and unfeigned conversion, that is the right turning to Christ, for whose sake it is as possible as needful to renounce even that which is nearest and dearest to us. What great reason have we then to search our hearts very narrowly that we may not be deceived! for we must not imagine ourselves converted, though by the advantage of a religious education, we may have acquired many good habits; and give our consent to all the sacred truths, and are approved of by others, who either ignorantly, or in a judgment of Charity, take us to be very good christians. Nor is it enough to think, that all must be well, and safe, because the good work of God once was begun, or we are still under the drawings of his good Spirit. In this manner a great many have miserably deluded their own souls; and this delusion cannot be avoided but by resolutely breaking forth, and pressing to the above-mentioned mark. All our awakenings will be to no purpose, except they are improved to the resisting even unto blood in striving against sin. If this is not thy case, be not deceived any longer, my dear reader, with false notions of such an important work; but pull down that old building of thy own fancy, which will stand thee in no stead, in the period of death; and delay not to begin the new one with all the necessary application in earnest prayers and wrestlings, for the obtaining of the right victory, and to be not only almost, but a christian indeed.

31 Jan.

(31)

THE kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls ; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it, Matt. xiii. 45, 46. Therefore lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven (not on earth :) for where your treasure is, there will be your heart also, Matt. vi. 20.

The love of money is the root of all evil. Such a dreadful Description the scripture gives of no other vice. Who considers this enough ? These roots lie often deeply concealed ; if we do not search them out to the bottom, but spare and nourish them in the least, they will stick fast in our hearts ; and before the disposition of a covetous man is truly changed to be benevolent and charitable, he cannot have a sure mark of his real conversion, and of Christ's being the sublime good and treasure of his heart. May the Lord refine and put us all in the right way !

Why doth the man of riches grow
To insolence and pride ?
To see his wealth and honours flow
With every rising tide ?
Why doth he treat the poor with scorn
Made of the self-same clay,
And boast as tho' his flesh were born
Of better dust than they ?

Not all his treasures can procure
His soul a short reprieve,
Redeem from death one guilty hour,
Or make his brother live.
The love of gold be banish'd hence,
That vile idolatry,
And ev'ry member, ev'ry sense
In sweet subjection lie.

1 Feb.

(32)

THIS a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting, 1 Tim. i. 15, 16.

Whoever is in himself convinced that he is a very guilty, nay, the chief of sinners, may look upon himself also as freely justified and saved through Christ; he being come to save all sinners without exception, even the most enormous. They who believe this make light of no sin, far from it; on every motion of sin they apply the blood of Christ, which as it is humbling, so it cherishes in them a filial confidence to draw near to God through Christ.

Plung'd in a gulph of dark despair
We wretched sinners lay,
Without one chearful beam of hope
Or spark of glimm'ring day.
With pitying eyes the Prince of grace
Beheld our helpless grief;
He saw, and (O amazing love!)
He ran to our relief.

Down from the shining seats above
With joyful haste he fled,
Enter'd the grave in mortal flesh,
And dwelt among the dead.
He spoil'd the pow'rs of darkness thus,
And broke our iron chains;
Jesus has freed our captive souls
From everlasting pains.

2 Feb.

(33)

THIS is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ. 1 John iii. 23. For God has sent his Son into the world that we might live through him. Chap. iv. 9.

The Father breaks forth, as it were, through the whole Scripture in high praises of his Son. He calls out from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him," *Mat. xvii. 5.* Nothing therefore can be more agreeable to him, than to receive this his Son, and believe his reports, *John xvi. 27.* and on doing this we shall have life; but by omitting it, we look upon him as a liar. Unbelief therefore in him who refuses to accept of this great gift, is, no doubt the greatest of all sins. O Lord, teach me this, and grant me faith.

'Why art thou so backward, O my poor soul, to believe, like the rest of God's children, in Christ? Hast thou not as good a right to it as they have? Who can dispute with thee this privilege? It is the express Will of the Father, nay, he even commands thee to do it. Has he given his only Son, by an Act of inconceivable love, to die for thee, to the very end that thou shouldst live? O what a pleasing thing will it be to him, to put thy whole trust upon this his well-beloved Son! This would be the joy of his heart, more than any thing else. Therefore delay no longer to receive what his love has offered thee; but firmly believe that the Father loves thee, as well as the Son.'

3 Feb.

(34)

WORTHY is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour and glory, and blessing, Rev.v. 12.

O Lord! how mean and slight notions have I often of thy great power; by these I am discouraged, and thou art robbed of thy praise: grant, therefore, that tho' I wou'd always be duly debased, and convinced of my nothingness in such a manner, as never to ascribe any good to myself, or think myself worthy of the least thing to the prejudice of thine honour: yet thy grace and power may at the same time appear to me abundantly greater than all my sins, so that I may have always encouragement enough to believe in and praise thy holy name.

Come let us join our cheerful songs
With angels round the throne;
Ten thousand thousand are their tongues,
But all their joys are one.

Worthy the lamb that dy'd, they cry,
To be exalted thus;
Worthy the lamb, our lips reply,
For he was slain for us.

Let all that dwell above the sky,
And air, and earth, and seas,
Conspire to lift his glories high,
And speak his endless praise.

The whole creation join in one,
To bless the sacred name
Of him that sits upon the throne,
And to adore the lamb.

4 Feb.

(35)

MY soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips. Psal. lxiii. 6. Allelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigns. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come. Rev. xix. 6.

What tends not to thy glory, O Lord, and is not thy own work? whatever appearance it may have, is it not really good and profitable? preserve and assist me therefore to do all things as of thee, in thy sight, and to thy honour; may my soul be ever magnifying thy name, O my dear Redeemer and Bridegroom; and my whole conversation be directed to thy praise. Grant that my heart and mouth may be ever full of thy great mercies, and overflow continually with thanksgiving.

My God, my King, thy various praise
Shall fill the remnant of my days;
Thy grace employ my humble tongue
Till death and glory raise the song.

The wings of every hour shall bear
Some thankful tribute to thine ear;
And every setting sun shall see
New works of duty done for thee.

Thy truth and beauty I'll proclaim,
Thy bounty flows, an endless stream;
Thy mercy swift, thine anger slow,
But dreadful to the stubborn foe.

And who can speak thy wondrous deeds?
Thy greatness all our thoughts exceeds;
Vast and unsearchable thy ways,
Vast and immortal be thy praise,

C 2

5 Feb.

(36)

Forsake not the works of thine own hands. Psal. cxxxviii. 8. Divine answer. *He which has begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.* Phil. i. 6.

The right way to grow in grace is not to draw it from God, as it were, by force, from a wrong principle or design; but first, to give thyself entirely over to thy heavenly Father thro' Christ, who knows what thou wantest, and will never forsake thee. Secondly, to abide in Christ, and carefully cherish the new life, which, be it ever so weak and little now, in comparison to the old man, will increase and gradually out-grow him, as a new skin does the old. May the Lord only give us grace to watch against the opposite extreme, so as never to be lull'd into a false rest, or a lukewarm spirit; but to be ever diligently and seriously employed in crucifying the flesh, and using all the means of grace; then we need not be anxiously troubled for the growing of the work of God in our souls.

My soul lies cleaving to the dust;
Lord, give me life divine;
From vain desires, and every lust,
Turn off these eyes of mine.
I need the influence of thy grace
To speed me in thy way,

Lest I should loiter in my race,
Or turn my feet astray.
Are not thy mercies sov'reign still?
And thou a faithful God?
Will thou not grant me warmer zeal
To run the heav'nly road?

6 Feb.

(37)

THE fashion of this world passes away, 1 Cor. vii. 31.

As long as we feed on the husks of the world, and are in love with it, we are neither willing nor able to taste the comforts of the love of God. But when sin and the world are become an abomination to us, and we strive to get rid of them, we are fit vessels to receive him: then we begin to hunger after him. And tho' we are chasten'd by the Lord, yet is he not angry with us, but does it to embitter sin and the world more and more to us, and to make us loath them, that we may not be condemned with the world.

Up to the fields where angels lie,
And living waters gently roll,
Fain would my thoughts leap out and fly,
But sin hangs heavy on my soul.

Thy wondrous blood, dear dying Christ,
Can make this world of guilt remove;
And thou canst bear me where thou fly'st,
On thy kind wings, celestial dove.

O might I once mount up and see
The glories of the eternal skies,

What little things these worlds would be?
How despicable to my eyes?

Had I a glance of thee, my God,
Kingdoms and men would vanish soon;
Vanish as tho' I saw 'em not,
As a dim candle dies at noon.

Great All in all, eternal King,
Let me but view thy lovely face,
And all my pow'rs shall bow and sing
Thine endless grandeur and thy grace,

7 Feb.

(38)

THINE is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen. Matt. vi. 13. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying: thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour and power, Rev. iv. 10, 11. Praise ye the Lord as much as ye can, he is still higher, nay he is all, and but a little portion is heard of him, Eccles. xliii. 29—32. Job xxvi. 14.

One that is really poor in spirit, tho' he had practised the duties of the christian life ever so long, and so well, always thinks himself to have received but a very little portion of Christ, and the work of sanctification hardly to be begun in his soul. So far is he from believing he has already attained to it, that after all his best actions he counts himself not worthy to be called by the name of a grateful son; he is never pleased with himself. No degree of holiness will satisfy his soul. He seeks and finds no rest or comfort, but in the infinite mercy of God, and in the pardon of his sins by faith; tho' he does not divide Christ, but receives him in all his offices, and gives himself intirely up to him without reserve, to be more and more sanctified and perfected. And in this state he is safe indeed, he is prepared for death, and has no reason to be anxiously troubled for higher degrees of sanctification. Death might come upon him before he arrived to it; and even his very best without a sense of God's forgiveness, would not support and comfort him in death.

All the assembling saints around
Fall worshipping before the lamb;

And in new songs of gospel sound
Address their honours to his name

8 Feb.

(39)

HALLOWED be thy Name, Matt. vi. 9. *For he must increase and I must decrease*, John iii. 30. *Christ's intercession*, John xvii. 11—19. *Holy Father, keep them through thine own Name, sanctify them thro' thy truth. For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified thro' the truth.*

We must not only plead our own cause in our prayers, but have the cause and the glory of God at heart; intercede for all without distinction, and carefully avoid that uncharitable narrowness of spirit so common to all parties, by which we seek only our own, and selfishly labour to erect, as it were, a new kingdom of God, even on the ruins of others, and at their expence. But this is not the right communion of all saints in the whole universe.

Many are we now, and one,
We who Jesus have put on:
Names, and sects, and parties fall,
'Thou, O Christ, art All in all!
Move and actuate, and guide,
Diverse gifts to each divide;

Plac'd according to thy will,
Let us all our own work fulfil.
One the Father is with thee;
Knit us in like unity;
Make us, O uniting Son,
One, as thou and he are one.

C 4

9 Feb.

(40)

THY kingdom come, Matt. vi. 10. Divine Answer. *Behold the kingdom of God is within you (and amongst you :) Luke. xvii. 21. The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power, 1 Cor. iv. 20. Consisting in righteousness, peace and joy of the Holy Ghost. Rom. xiv. 17.*

O! how many thousands deceive themselves with a vain, dead presumption of faith, moral honesty, and fine words; whilst the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, still have the dominion in their hearts. Consequently the power of Christ, by which even the most beloved idol is cast down and trodden under feet, has no place in them. O Lord, help thy children, that they may not return again to vanity; some being still intangled even in their old age. May this never be my case, I beseech thee,

The gospel bids the dead revive,
Sinners obey the voice, and live:
Dry bones are rais'd, and cloath'd afresh,
And hearts of stone are turn'd to flesh.

This is the word of truth and love,
Sent to the nations from above;
Jehovah here resolves to shew
What his almighty grace can do.

This remedy did wisdom find,
To heal diseases of the mind.
This sov'reign balm, whose virtues can
Restore the ruin'd creature man.

Where satan reign'd in shades of night,
The gospel strikes a heav'nly light;
Our lusts its wondrous pow'r controuls,
And calms the rage of angry souls,

10 Feb.

(41)

TH Y will be done on earth as it is in heaven, Matth. vi. 10. Answer.
God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth: for there is one God and one Mediator betwixt God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all. 1 Tim. ii 4, 5. Therefore he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, 2 Pet. iii. 9. Ezek. xviii. 23, 32.

O the inestimable riches of universal grace! this minute, O my distressed soul, thou canst lay hold on 'em, and firmly believe this promise to belong even to thee, and that thy lovely Saviour is as willing as he is able to save thee from all thy sins. Whatever objections may be raised against it, and engross thy thoughts, hearken not to them, but resolutely reject them as the most detestable suggestions of the devil, who, above all things, fights most against faith, knowing well enough that unbelief is the source of all wickedness. Therefore mind him not; he is a liar: but the word of God may be depended upon. Hence thou mayst confidently say, that I am exceedingly corrupted, is too true; but not beyond the infinite grace and power of God. Still I am a man; and he being willing that no man should perish, but that all should be saved; this his will is to me the surest pledge of my justification, sanctification, and salvation. It is his will, and it is mine too, that I should be saved, what enemy then can hinder it?

Lord, we confess our num'rous faults,
How great our guilt has been!
Foolish and vain were all our thoughts,
And all our lives were sin.

But, O my soul, for ever praise,
For ever love his name,
Who turns thy feet from dang'rous ways
Of folly, sin, and shame,

11 Feb.

(42)

LIGHT is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Psal. xcvi. 11. Unto the upright there arises light in darkness; he is gracious, full of compassion, and righteous, Psal. cxii. 4. Therefore cast not away confidence, which has great recompence of reward; for ye have need of patience, &c. for yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry, Heb. x. 35, 37. Isaiah lviii. 10, 11, 12.

— This shews that believers are subject to many changes of joy and sorrow. In a state of gladness therefore we have reason to fear; and in the hours of trouble and sadness to entertain good hopes. Thus we shall always be able to keep the happy medium between the extremes of levity and despair. Before a man has a true sense of his own miseries, the complaints and infirmities of the saints are often a stumbling-block; but afterwards they will administer him great comfort. This is the reason that God has revealed them in Scripture; for the complaints of his children and elect, as Luther observes, give more comfort than all their most heroic actions.

Alas! it swells my sorrows high,
To see my blessed Jesus frown;
My spirits sink, my comforts die,
And all the springs of life are down.

Yet why, my soul, why these complaints?
Still while he frowns his bowels move;
Still on his heart he bears his saints,
And feels their sorrows, and his love.

12 Feb.

(43)

FOR in that he himself has suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted, Heb. ii. 18. For we have not a high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin, chap. iv. 18.

To have this High-priest and Saviour, is to believe in him, tho' in weakness and trembling. The sensible, sweet and full assurance of his indwelling proceeds from the sealing of the Spirit, which follows afterwards, and is not always experienced in a state of darkness and temptation. But the Lord disowns us not for wanting it, but graciously bears with our infirmities.

With joy we meditate the grace
Of our High-Priest above ;
His heart is made of tenderness,
His bowels melt with love.

Touch'd with a sympathy within,
He knows our feeble frame ;
He knows what sore temptations mean,
For he has felt the same.

He in the days of feeble flesh
Pour'd out his cries and tears ;
And in his measure feels afresh
What ev'ry member bears.

Then let our humble faith address
His mercy and his pow'r,
We shall obtain delivering grace
In the distressing hour.

13 Feb.

(44)

GOD was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; for he has made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 19, 21. Col. i. 20. 1 Pet. ii. 24.

It highly concerns all believers, who are desirous to have always peace and support within, to be ever sensible of their own misery and spiritual poverty, and so to live and rest solely and wholly in the all-sufficient atonement and righteousness of Christ Jesus our Saviour. Disquietness and laziness generally proceeds from self-righteousness, and our not looking up and being indebted to him for every thing, but secretly trusting to something in ourselves.

Jesu, thou art my righteousness,
For all my sins were thine:
Thy death has bought of God my peace;
Thy life has made him mine.
Spotless and just in thee I am;
I feel my sins forgiven;
I taste salvation in thy name,
And antedate my heaven.

For ever here my rest shall be,
Close to thy bleeding side;
'Tis all my hope, and all my plea;
For me the Saviour dy'd!
My dying Saviour and my God,
Fountain for guilt and sin,
Sprinkle me ever in thy blood,
And cleanse, and keep me clean,

*NE*vertbeless I am continually with thee. Thou hast holden me by the right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and after-ward receive me to thy glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever, Psal. lxxiii. 23—26. Psal. xvi. 18.

Babes and religion not only long for Christ, but for sensible communion with him; and very often they are indulged with it, that they may be weaned from the world. But those of fuller age, who have their senses more exercised, are content to have him only, and to be adopted by him; relying more on the word and covenant of God, than upon sweet sensations of the soul, which in times of trial and temptations are often wanting.

How oft have sin and satan strove
To rend my soul from thee, my God?
But everlasting is thy love,
And Jesus seals it with his blood.
Amidst temptations sharp and long,
My soul to this dear refuge flies;

Hope is my anchor, firm and strong,
While tempests blow, and billows rise.
The Gospel bears my spirits up;
A faithful and unchanging God
Lays the foundation for my hope,
In oaths, and promises, and blood.

15 Feb.

(46)

THERE is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved, Psal. xlv. 4, 5. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world, 1 John iv. 4. Psal. cx. 2, Zechar. ii. 5.

True christians still are subject to temptations from within and without, but watching unto prayer they do not fall by them. On the contrary, as temptations are great helps to discover their hidden infirmities, and stir them up to be more cautious, serious, and faithful, they are followed and rewarded with great and glorious victories; consequently are so far from being half a fall, that they rather serve to keep believers from falling. What reason have we then to be afraid of temptations, since every one carries a new blessing along with it?

How honourable is the place

Where we adoring stand,
Zion, the glory of the earth,
And beauty of the land.

Bulwarks of mighty grace defend

The city where we dwell;
The walls of strong salvation made,
Defy th' assaults of hell.

Trust in the Lord, for ever trust,

And banish all your fears:
Strength in the Lord Jehovah dwells,
Eternal as his years.

What tho' the rebels dwell on high,

His arm shall bring them low;
Low as the caverns of the grave,
Their lofty heads shall bow.

16 Feb.

(47)

FOR our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. Therefore, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, note, from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, (also from all their afflictions) and their works to follow them, Rev. xiv. 13.

Some pretend to be so evangelical, as to have no longer any inward troubles and vexations; neither will they allow of such prayers or other acts of christian duty and devotion as are done with any reluctance of heart, calling them legal and meritorious works of our own. This would be true, if there were in a true christian no remains of unbelief and sin, which often makes him dull and heavy, and must always be overcome, as it were, by force; tho' the spirit be willing, and in the midst of all troubles and groanings longs the more after that perfect rest above,

Our sins, alas! how strong they be;
And like a raging sea,
They break our duty, Lord, to thee
And hurry us away.

The waves of trouble how they rise!
How loud the tempests roar!
But death shall land our weary souls
Safe on the heavenly shore.

17 Feb.

(48)

THE peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds thro' Christ Jesus, Phil. iv. 7. Isaiah liii. 5. Col. i. 10.

As long as a man sees no good in himself, and yet finds every thing in Christ, his heart enjoys a heavenly peace. But as soon as he is puffed up, and does not seek and find his rest and salvation purely and solely in the forgiveness of his sins, he steps out into a false road, which is full of disquietness. These are the words of the late pious Mr. Professor Francke.

Lord, how secure and blest'd are they
Who feel the joys of pardon'd sin !
Should storms of wrath shake earth and sea,
Their minds have heav'n and peace within.
The day glades swiftly o'er their heads,
Made up of innocence and love ;
And soft and silent as the shades
Their nightly minutes gently move.

How oft they look to th' heav'nly hills,
Where groves of living pleasure grow,
And longing hopes, and fearless smiles,
Sit undisturb'd upon their brow.
While wretched we, like worms and moles,
Lie grov'ling in the dust below ;
Almighty grace, renew our souls,
And we'll aspire to glory too.

18 Feb.

(49)

THE Lord preserves the simple; I was brought low, and he helped me. Psal.
cxvi. 6.

He who walks in godly simplicity and humility, accounting his own infirmities always the greatest, will best be preserved from being puffed up and sifted by the enemy of souls. And surely nothing should humble us more, than justification by free grace. The more we consider and carefully cherish that, the more this simple, child-like, quiet temper will increase: for since there is nothing in ourselves which can be depended upon, but all must be freely received from Christ; this, at the same time cutting off all vain boasting, brings us low, settles our peace on Christ, who is our all, and is sure enough to be rested upon.

It is only from thee, O my dear Saviour, I can learn true simplicity; teach me therefore to turn mine eye not upon others, but upon myself. Humble me to the uttermost, and fashion me after thy own mind, that I may be careful to avoid every thing that is contrary to love. Keep me, O my light, from all self-conceitdness, bridle my carnal reason, and pull down all vain imaginations. Grant that my eye may be fixed only upon that one thing needful, which lasts eternally, and that in all my words, deeds and gestures I may always resemble the simplicity, innocence, fidelity, and love of a little child, MATTH. xiii. 3.

D

19 Feb.

(50)

THE Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want, Psal. xxiii. 1. He says it himself. I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands, John x. 10, 28.

The Lord being my shepherd also, what can I then want? Nothing that is really good for me. The Sense of it may sometimes be wanting; but even this want is the beginning of a greater fulness, and certainly works for my good. It stirreth me up to pray more earnestly: and thus my wants drive me to the green pastures, and to the brooks of fresh waters, even to my good Shepherd, who is himself the best food, and the spring of living water.

My shepherd is the living Lord;
Now shall my wants be well supply'd;
His providence and holy word
Become my safety and my guide.
In pastures where salvation grows
He makes we feed, he makes me rest;
Their living water gently flows,
And all the food divinely blest.

My wand'ring feet his ways mistake,
But he restores my soul to peace,
And leads me for his mercy's sake
In the fair path of righteousness.
Tho' I walk thro' the gloomy vale
Where death and all its terrors are,
My heart and hope shall never fail,
For God my Shepherd's with me there.

20 Feb.

(51)

THE Lord is our king, he will save us. Isa. xxxiii. 22. The Lord is strong and mighty in battle, Psal. xxiv. 8. The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous, the right hand of the Lord does valiantly, Psal. cxviii. 15. Therefore I can do all things thro' Christ which strengtheneth me, Phil. iv. 13. For here is Emanuel, Isa. viii. 10.

No victory without a combat, and combats sometimes are attended with dangerous wounds; but this only humbles us, and makes us more circumspect. Abide therefore always in the wounds of Jesus, which will certainly make thee whole and strong in faith, so as to baffle all the assaults of thine enemies, and gladly to sing in thy tabernacle, "Thanks be unto God, who always causes us to triumph in Christ, 2 Cor. ii. 14.

Whence do our mournful thoughts arise!

And where's our courage fled?

Has restless sin and raging hell

Struck all our comforts dead?

Have we forgot th' almighty name

That form'd the earth and sea?

And can an all-creating arm

Grow weary or decay:

Treasures of everlasting might

In our Jehovah dwell;

He gives the conquest to the weak,

And treads their foes to hell.

The saints shall mount on eagle's wings.

And taste the promis'd bliss,

"Till their unwearied feet arrive

Where perfect pleasure is.

D 2

21 Feb.

(52)

T H E Lord hath delivered my soul in peace, Psal. lv. 19.

O Lord give me grace always to seek and find rest for my spirit and conscience in thy wounds, and never yield to the condemnation of the law ; but to be as ready on the other hand to mortify the desires of the flesh, so as to fall neither, into slavish fear and distrust, nor into carnal rest and security, but to make good use both of the law and the gospel in its turn, and so to adorn myself continually, that I may be ready to follow thy call to the place of everlasting rest, without any further warning.

Jesus I throw my arms around,
And hang upon thy breast;
Without a gracious smile from thee,
My spirit cannot rest.
Oh ! tell me that my worthless name
Is graven on thy hands ;

Shew me some promise in thy book,
Where my salvation stands.
Give me one kind assuring word,
To sink my fears again,
And chearfully my soul shall wait
Her threescore years and ten.

22 Feb.

(53)

TH E Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee; and give thee peace, Numb. vi. 24, 25, 26. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you, John xiv. 27, 28. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. Chap. xvi. 33.

Being still in the world, we cannot be without trouble; nay out of Christ, every thing causes trouble. But that we should not be weighed down by it, he says, *Abide in me; in me ye have peace*: This carrieth us safely through all tribulations. O Lord, grant that I may ever be found in the strong hold of thy wounds, and enjoy peace amidst all the troubles of this world.

Bless'd be the Father and his love,
To whose celestial source we owe
Rivers of endless joy above,
And rills of comfort here below.

Glory to thee, great Son of God,
From whose dear wounded body rolls D 3

A precious stream of vital blood,
Pardon and life for dying souls.
We give thee, sacred Spirit, praise,
Who in our hearts of sin and woe
Makes living springs of grace arise,
And into endless glory flow.

23 Feb.

(54)

THE Lord do that which seems him good, 2 Sam. x. 12.

A christian still feels the motions of self-will, and consequently of sin in his heart. And if it be asked, how can Christ and sin dwell together in one heart? the answer is, as a king and rebels in one kingdom or town. He does not agree or correspond with them, but subdues them, and maintains peace: But where self-will has the dominion, there is nothing but trouble and confusion; for un sanctified passions and a bad conscience not only are inward tortures, but often turn to our great disadvantage, even in worldly affairs; whereas in the blood of Christ we have a good conscience, abundance of peace, and can be content and happy in the most indifferent outward circumstances.

Take great heed, therefore, O my dear christian, never to be led by thy own spirit, were it even in such things as seem to bring glory to God, if it is not of his own appointment. Our hearts sometimes are very deceitfully desirous of what pleases ourselves, while we pretend to seek God's glory; and were we not crossed in these our designs, they would prove a great burden to our life. Blessed is he, who not only prays with his lips, but is heartily willing also that nothing but the will of the Lord should be done in every thing. It is he alone that understands what may be good or dangerous to our spiritual or temporal circumstances. We being often blinded and drawn by our lusts, are too much inclined to choose at random what would be perhaps most detrimental.

24 Feb.

(55)

THE Lord will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayers, Psal. cii. 17. They looked unto him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed, Psal. xxxiv. 5. See also the instance of the woman of Canaan, Matth. xv. 21—28. And what Christ says, Luke xi. 5—13. Ch. xviii. 1—8. Likewise of a tossed vessel, Matth. viii. 24—27.

The load of outward and inward affliction is not always prayed away with a few words, or in a few days. Sometimes it is necessary even to wrestle with God, and be very instant too; how else could faith and patience be exercised! if therefore the trials are sharp and lasting, it is not to weaken our faith; but to stir us up to be more instant zealous in prayer and the right use of the word of God; and by this means, to be so much more gloriously delivered and strengthened in faith: For whatever God sends upon us, it is not for the lessening, but for the increase of our faith.

God is the refuge of his saints,
When storms of sharp distress invade;
Ere we can offer our complaints,
Behold him present with his aid.
Let mountains from their seats be hurl'd
Down to the deep, and buried there;

Convulsions shake the solid world,
Our faith shall never yield to fear
Loud may the troubled ocean roar,
In sacred peace our souls abide,
While ev'ry nation, ev'ry shore
D 4 Trembles and dreads the swelling tide.

25 Feb.

(56)

I Dwell in the high and holy place, with him also, that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth, for the spirit should sail before me, and the souls which I have made, Isaiah lvii. 15, 16.

To insist too much upon the sensible joy of faith, might produce a wrong joy, and make weak souls weaker still. Many a sincere christian's heart is like a bottle of a very narrow passage, which can receive the dew of heavenly comfort only by little drops. But dost thou feel thyself quite naked and void of all good, Christ will surely cover thee with the robes of righteousness. Go intirely out of thyself, looking only to him for every thing; and whatever gift of joy, peace and holiness may be given thee, trust not to them, but to Christ alone. This will make thee sure, and keep thy heart at rest.

Thus saith the high and lofty one,
I sit upon my holy throne;
My name is God, I dwell on high;
Dwell in my own eternity.
But I descend to worlds below,
On earth I have a mansion too;

The humble spirit and contrite
Is an abode of my delight.
The humble soul my words revive,
I bid the mourning sinner live;
Heal all the broken hearts I find,
And ease the sorrows of the mind.

26 Feb.

(57)

O N E of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there-
out blood and water, John xix. 34.

Here the fountain of grace and salvation is opened for cleansing us from all sin and uncleanness. If thou only canst and will acknowledge and accuse thyself in every thing (sins and duties) to be a transgressor, and humbly desirest to be sprinkled and washed by the blood of Christ, thou canst do enough, and art blessed indeed, *Math. v. 6. Heb. ix. 13 14.*

My Saviour's pierced side
Pour'd out a double flood;
By water we are purify'd;
And pardon'd by the blood.
Look up my soul to him
Whose death was thy desert,
And humbly view the living stream
Flow from his breaking heart.
There on the cursed tree
In dying pangs he lies.

Fulfils his Father's great decree,
And all our wants supplies.
Thus the redeemer came
By water and by blood:
And when the spirit speaks the same
We feel his witness good.
Lord, cleanse my soul from sin,
Nor let thy grace depart;
Great Comforter abide within,
And witness to my heart,

27 Feb.

(58)

SATAN has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, Luke xxii. 31, 32. Yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. Amos ix. 9. For, I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, Rev. iii. 10.

Sometimes we may imagine ourselves to be divinely convinced of the will of God, both by seeming outward providences and inward persuasions of faith; and yet it is possible that the siftings of satan are at the bottom; however the Lord will over-rule him at last, and order all things to the best for his people. May the Lord make us watchful against our own spirit, and against the evil one, especially when he is transformed into an angel of light, that it may not be in his power to sift us.

In vain the baffled prince of hell
His cursed projects tries;
We that were doom'd his endless slaves
Are raised above the skies.
Jesus the Lord shall guard me safe
From ev'ry ill design;

And to his heav'nly kingdom keep
This feeble soul of mine.
God is my everlasting aid,
And hell shall rage in vain;
To him be highest glory paid,
And endless praise. Amen

28 Feb.

(59)

WHOSE adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, &c. But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price, 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4. In rest all ye be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be your strength, Isaiah lxx. 15.

A christian's best accoutrements and festival cloaths, in which he daily celebrates his Sabbath, is called, Col. iii. 10, 12, 14. the new man, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, and, above all, charity. These are our ornaments we shall be dressed and adorned with. What dost thou adorn most, Body or Soul? "O thou meek and quiet Lamb of God, justly I blush before thee, when I consider my impatience, tho' I am never innocent, like thee. I humbly beseech thee to forgive me these my transgression, since thou hast made sufficient atonement for all by thy meritorious silence. But deliver me from this choleric, hot, and peevish temper also, and give me grace in all inward and outward troubles, to have that long-bearing mind which was in thee. Make me daily more and more like a lamb; that on all Occasions, grievous or joyful, I may be duly composed, and shew that excellent heavenly ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, not in many words, but in reality and Power. Amen."

Giver of concord, Prince of peace,
Meek, lamb-like Son of God,
And our unruly passions cease,
And quench them with thy blood.

O let us find the ancient way
Our wond'ring foes to move,
And force the heathen world to say,
"See how these christians love!"

1 March.

(60)

DEATH is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 54.—57.

O gracious Lord, I know and receive thee as my Redeemer, and rely on thy death in some measure; but alas! I do not know thee yet as I ought, and am far from being strong and firm enough, since I am frightened still at the thoughts of death. Grant, therefore, that by all thy Providences, Trials, and Deliverances, I may be so established in faith on thy word, as to prevail against all darkness and fears; that at last I may be enabled with humble boldness, to look death in the face, and really find it swallowed up in victory by thy meritorious death.

O for an overcoming faith
To cheer my dying hours,
To triumph o'er the monster death,
And all his frightful pow'rs!
Joyful with all the strength I have,
My quiv'ring lips should sing,
"Where is thy boasted vict'ry, grave?
"And where the monster's sting?

If sin be pardon'd, I'm secure,
Death has no sting beside;
The law gives sin its damning pow'r;
But Christ my ransom dy'd.
Now to the God of victory
Immortal thanks be paid,
Who makes us conqu'rors while we die,
Through Christ our living head.

2 March.

(61)

B*BROAD is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: But, narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it, Mat. vii. 13, 14.*

This sounds too harsh in the ears of the old man, who would not have the law made use of in these gospel times, either to the converted or unconverted; and yet to the old man the law, and not the gospel, properly belongs. *St. Paul*, that great preacher of the gospel, made use of the law to rouse unconverted *Felix* from his security, (*Acts* xxiv. 25.) and to warn the converted *Romans* from falling into it again, *Rom.* viii. 13. For christians are still in the flesh, which must be restrained by the law; the gospel is designed only for the spirit; not for the flesh. O Lord, keep the flesh always within due bounds in the narrow way that it may never be nourished by the food of the spirit.

Which way dost thou walk? examine thyself. Is it the narrow way? art thou quite sure of it? venture not to go on any further at random. It is matter of great consequence; if thou wilt be safe, try better for it, thou may'st easily be deceived. Alas! thou art surely in the broad way to destruction, if thou still lovest and art conformed to the world. Art thou but indifferently with regard to the things of God, relishing more the vanities, pleasures, companies, treasures, and honours of this world? thou art not in the good narrow way that leads unto life. O consider this well, and stop short, before it is too late, and thou drop into the bottomless pit of perdition.

Strait is the way, the door is strait,
That leads to joys on high;

'Tis but a few that find the gate,
While crowds mistake and die.

3 March.

(62)

THE desire of our soul is to thy name and to the remembrance of thee
Isaiah xxvi. 8. *My soul followeth hard after thee,* Psal. lxxiii. 8. Cantic
ii. 4.

Dost thou give thyself intirely to me, O my heavenly bridegroom
it is but reasonable I should grant thee thy desire also, and give myself
intirely up to thee again, that each may have a true delight in the other.
Here, I offer therefore all that I have, body, soul and spirit, with all
the faculties and senses belonging to the same, do I subscribe myself for
ever to be thy own, if thou wilt be pleased to accept of this my portion
and little all.

Infinite pity touch'd the heart
Of the eternal Son;
Descending from the heav'nly court,
He left his Father's throne.
His living pow'r, and dying love,
Redeem'd unhappy men,
And rais'd the ruins of our race
To life and God again.

To thee, dear Lord, our flesh and soul
We joyfully resign;
Bless'd Jesus, take us for thy own,
For we are doubly thine.
Thine honour shall for ever be
The business of our days,
For ever shall our thankful tongues
Speak thy deserved praise.

4 March.

(63)

A Man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directs his steps, Prov. xvi.
9. There are many devices in a man's heart, nevertheless the counsel of
the Lord, that shall stand, Chap. xix. 21.

Many pretend to have a clean heart and a good will, whilst they harbour foolish and consequently unclean designs in their bosoms. It is said, a good man brings forth good things out of the good treasure of the heart; and it is very true; but observe, that it is said, "out of the good treasure" of the heart (which is the new man,) and not simply out of the heart, for there also still dwells the old man and evil treasure of sin and corruption, which freely springs up, like the weeds.

Lord, send thy spirit down to write
Thy law upon my heart!
Nor let my tongue indulge deceit,
Nor act the liar's part.
From vanity turn off my eyes,
Let no corrupt design,
Nor covetous desires arise
Within this soul of mine.

Order my footsteps by thy word,
And make my heart sincere;
Let sin have no dominion, Lord,
But keep my conscience clear.
Make me to walk in thy commands;
'Tis a delightful road;
Nor let my head, or heart, or hand,
Offend against my God.

5 March.

(64)

THE troubles of my heart are enlarged, O bring me out of my Distresses,
Psal. xxv. 17. Divine answer. *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;*
a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise, Psal. li. 17.

Some take great pains to warn and caution others exceedingly against contrition and inward trouble of heart. But whoever, without having such a broken heart, desires nothing but the comforts of the gospel, makes light of sin, and will make a dangerous shipwreck at last. For in this world we have trouble, not only in the beginning, but also in the progress of our christian course. Neither does it any harm, but it humbles deeply; and drives us to Christ, to seek and find comfort in him; consequently godly sorrow and holy mourning are not looked upon, and trusted to, as meritorious works, by no means. It is only Christ, who by his merits has recovered us from sin and wrath, who can be relied upon. May the Lord prepare and make us evermore fit duly to receive his gospel, that we may never trifle and make light with this holy thing.

Where are the mourners (says the Lord)
That wait and tremble at my word;
That walk in darkness all the day?
Come, make my name your trust and stay.

The softest couch that nature knows
Can give the conscience no repose:
Look to my righteousness and live;
Comfort and peace are mine to give.

6 March.

(65)

UPON thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of ophir. The king's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is wrought gold. Hearken, O daughter, and consider and incline thine ear. Forget also thine own people and thy Father's house, so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him, Psal. xlv. 10, 11, 12, 14.

Observe, O my soul! that thy celestial bridegroom does not require any ornament, merit, worthiness and beauty of thy own: no, he will wash thee himself with his blood, he will adorn thee and make thee truly amiable to himself and to his Father. O! sweet and eternal truth! "He has loved and washed me also from my sins in his own blood." He has, and I have in him, a more than angelical beauty. O! the unspeakable fairness of this bridegroom and his spouse! why should I not cleave to him alone, and love him above all others?

The king of saints, how fair his face,
Adorn'd with majesty and grace!
He comes with blessings from above,
And wins the nations to his love!
At his right-hand our eyes behold
The queen array'd in purest gold;
The world admires her heav'nly dress,
Her robe of joy and righteousness.

He forms her beauties like his own,
He calls and seats her near his throne:
Fair stranger, let thine heart forget
The idols of thy native state.
So shall the king the more rejoice
In thee the Favourite of his choice;
Let him be lov'd and yet adorn'd,
For he's thy Maker and thy Lord.

F.

7 March.

(66)

THEY that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the lusts and affections thereof, Gal. v. 24.

Luther on these words says; ' Although the flesh is alive still, and frequently stirs, yet it cannot fulfil its desires, because it is fasten'd to the cross: ' With the crucifying of the flesh we have to do as long as we live. This is the cross we are to take up daily, and which either prevents many outward crosses, or at least yields great comfort under it.

The cross being an extraordinary good means to experience the sweetness of the word of God, thou must always be ready and prepared for it, O my soul. And if none comes from without, take care to break thy own will in every thing. Painful and hard as this may seem to be at first, yet it will certainly very soon grow easier and be matter of real joy. Blessing and peace will attend thy ways and steps, that thou shalt glorify God for having been resigned and guided, not by thy own, but his good will and pleasure. Self-will on the other hand creates nothing but vexation, trouble and uneasiness. It is punished by itself, deprives us of all real blessings, and therefore deserves, and is best to be broke and crucified in its first motions.

8 March.

(67)

THE thorns, of the cares, the riches, and the pleasures of life, sprung up with it, and choked it, Luke viii. 7. Therefore break up your fallow ground, and sow not among the thorns, Jer. iv. 3. Of good and useful thorns, see Hos. xi. 6.

Those, who by the power of Christ faithfully pluck up the least thorn of sin without delay, can happily avoid many great struggles. It is by this means that the flesh is weakened, the Spirit strengthened, and consequently the combat made easier. But to come off without any struggle or conflict at all, is impossible, as long as we carry our enemy, the flesh, about us, which is ever opposing all what is good.

Of such thorns as prick the lustful flesh, our noble Spirit gathers the sweetest roses; but those gardens of roses which gratify the flesh, bring such thorns as will certainly soon kill the Spirit. Choose therefore whatever thou pleasest, thorns must be chosen, who either hurt the flesh or the Spirit. But I hope thou wilt be wise enough to pluck out the least thorns of sinful lusts before they are grown up to a whole hedge; which would greatly increase thy trouble and pains, and make thee suffer and pay dear enough for so short and poor a pleasure.

9 March.

(68)

AND account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation, 2 Pet. iii. 15.

That even believers, considering their present weak condition, may account this long suffering of the Lord their salvation, and bear with others also; sometimes the work of renovation is not of so quick a growth.

And are we wretches still alive!

And do we yet rebel!

'Tis boundless, 'tis amazing love,

That bears us up from hell!

The burden of our weighty guilt

Would sink us down to flames,

And threatening vengeance roll above,

To crush our feeble frames.

Almighty goodness cries, forbear,

And straight the thunder stays:

And dare we now provoke his wrath,

And weary out his grace?

Lord, we have long abus'd thy love,

Too long indulg'd our sin,

Our asking hearts e'en bleed to see

What rebels we have been.

No more, ye lusts, shall ye command,

No more, will we obey;

Stretch out, O God, thy conqu'ring hand,

And drive thy foes away.

10 March.

(69)

IT is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every Morning; great is thy faithfulness. For the Lord will not cast off for ever. But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies: For he does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men, Lament. iii. 22, 31, 32, 33. Heb. xii. 11. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, &c.

Though our sins be forgiven, chastisements may be inflicted upon us nevertheless; but it proceeds from affection and not from anger. These by our weaknesses are laid open to us and lessened. For as much as we feel our infirmities and are desirous of help, our hearts are empty vessels which Christ is willing to fill up with his grace. And though thy wants were never so great and particular, be not discouraged, but rather say; O Lord, here I bring thee a very large vessel, which to fill it up, very much grace and power will be required; but thy love and faithfulness have engaged to supply even our greatest wants.

Lord, if thy saints deserve rebuke,
Thou hast a gentle rod;
Thy providences and thy book
Shall make them know their God.
Blest is the man thy hands chastise,
And to his duty draw:

Thy scourges make thy children wise,
When they forget thy law.
But God will ne'er cast off his saints,
Nor his own promise break;
He pardons his inheritance
For their redeemer's sake.

11 March.

(70)

THE love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

If the love and power of Christ shall constrain us, we must needs be always meditating and relying on him and his death. This will cut off all workings of our own, and make room for Christ to work every thing in us and through us. O Lord, may thy love on the cross fire my frozen heart also, that once I may begin to love and to praise thee purely and fervently, and to offer my whole life up to thee as an intire sacrifice of love.

Raise your triumphant songs
To an immortal tune;
Let the wide earth resound the deeds
Celestial grace has done,
Sing how eternal love
Its chief beloved chose;
And bid him raise our wretched race
From their abyss of woes.

Now sinners dry your tears,
Let hopeless sorrows cease;
Bow to the sceptre of his love,
And take the offer'd peace,
Lord, we obey thy call;
We lay a humble claim
To the salvation thou hast brought,
And love and praise thy name.

12 March.

(71)

BUT the greatest of these is charity, Love, 1 Cor. xiii. 13. Therefore let all your things be done with love, Chap. xvi. 14. In case they shall be done in God, who is love, and shall follow us, and be rewarded eternally. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another, Rom. xiii. 8.

The debt of love can never be discharged by alms-givings, or greater acts of charity. Having done all these, we still owe ourselves and our whole substance to God, to offer it up to his service whenever he should be pleased to require it of our hands; for we can call nothing our own. Whatever we reserve as our own against his will, is laid up as a great treasure of trouble and vexation, which gives much more uneasiness than comfort to our minds.

O let thy love our hearts constrain!
Jesus the crucified,
What hast thou done our hearts to gain!
Languish'd, and groan'd, and died!
Who would not now pursue the way
Where Jesus' footsteps shine?

E 4

Who would not own the pleasing sway
Of charity divine?
Love is the grace that keeps her pow'r,
In all the realms above;
There faith and hope are known no more,
But saints for ever love.

13 March.

(72)

SIN is a reproof to any people, Prov. xiv. 34

Be not deceived therefore with false notions of faith. Where there is true faith, no sin has dominion. A man having no feeling of the desperate wickedness of his heart, may imagine to have faith enough; but being once convinced of that, he soon perceives that it is the hardest thing in the world to believe. It requires the same power by which Christ was raised from the dead. *St. Paul* most emphatically describes it with six remarkable words, *Eph. i. 19, 20.* How then can any man think it an easy matter to believe? O the dreadful blindness and security which all the world runs into! may the Lord open their eyes!

Lord, how secure my conscience was,
And felt no inward dread!

I was alive without the law,
And thought my sins were dead.

My hopes of heav'n were firm and bright;
But since the precept came

With a convincing pow'r and light,
I find how vile I am,

I'm like a helpless captive sold,
Under the pow'r of sin;

I cannot do the good I would,
Nor keep my conscience clean.

My God, I cry with ev'ry breath
For some kind pow'r to save,
To break the yoke of sin and death,
And thus redeem the slave.

14 March.

(73)

SEEING we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, Heb. xii. 1, 2.

This sin is the old man, and consequently does not mean only that which is outwardly in the world, but which we carry about in our bosoms. According to St. Paul and the whole tenor of the Scripture, the christian warfare consists in putting off of the old, and putting on the new man. Therefore it is not a strange thing for christians still to have conflicts, nay their whole life is engaged therein; and he that has no experience of it, either is a very rash and ignorant man, or an indolent and slothful christian.

Blest are the undefil'd in heart,
Whose ways are right and clean;
Who never from thy law depart,
But fly from every sin.

Blest are the men that keep thy word,
And practise thy commands;
With their whole heart they seek the Lord,
And serve thee with their hands.

Great is their peace who love thy law;
How firm their souls abide:
Nor can a bold temptation draw
Their steady feet aside.

Then shall my heart have inward joy,
And keep my face from shame,
When all thy statutes I obey,
And honour all thy name.

15 March.

(74)

*T*HE time is short, 1 Cor. vii. 29. Therefore *redeem the time*, Eph. v. 16. *For we have here no continuing city, but we seek one to come*, Heb. xiii. 14.

A christian is only covetous of time, always to lay up something for eternity ; but not greedy of money, or given to other lusts. It grieves him rather, when he feels something of this against his will. He is content to have little of temporal things, and even to suffer losses in these, if he can but gain something for the life to come. This he chiefly aims at in his trade and conversation, looking upon himself in this world only as a traveller in an inn.

Why should this earth delight us so ?

Why should we fix our eyes
On these low grounds where sorrows grow,
And ev'ry pleasure dies ?

While time his sharpest teeth prepares
Our comforts to devour,
There is a land above the stars,
And joys above his pow'r,

Nature shall be dissolv'd and die,
The sun must end his race,
The earth and sea for ever fly
Before my Saviour's face.

When will that glorious morning rise ?
When the last trumpet sound,
And call the nations to the skies
From underneath the ground ?

16 March.

(75)

*W*E then that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves, Rom. xv. 1. Considering thyself lest thou also be tempted, Gal. v. 1. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? Rom. XIV. 4.

Extraordinary quickenings and strengthenings being often followed by particular temptations, conflicts and sufferings, require a particular watchfulness, if we would be earnest not to provoke the Lord to visit us with sore punishments for our carelessness. Fear therefore, rejoice with trembling and secure thyself from falling, by tempering thy joy with true humility and gentleness towards the faults of others.

Be never so high-minded, O man! at the miscarriages of others, as to think thou wouldst not do so, should it happen to be thy case: for if God does not hold thee up himself, thou wilt surely make greater mistakes. Therefore thou hadst better not look upon others, but upon thyself: and for fear of falling, be continually watchful in prayer. A great many would not have fallen so deep had they been truly humble and more charitable in judging of others. He who exalteth himself above others, and does not bear with the weak, is sometimes humbled and debased under the very weakest of all. Bear therefore, since God bears with thee: And he that bears most with others, shews the greatest strength,

17 March.

(76)

THOU art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me and guide me, Ps. xxxi. 4. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble; for I am a Father to Israel, Jer xxxi. 9.

He that comes in this manner, will certainly be led of God: Now O Lord, I am blind, and heartily desire also to be directed by thee alone in all my ways and steps, in great and little things. Suffer me never to follow my own spirit and natural inclinations, whatever good appearance they may have. Be pleased to cross them continually, and give me grace to resist the least motions of self-will also without delay, that nothing may overcome and cause me afterwards an invincible or even a forer conflict.

Thou art my portion, O my God;
Seen as I know thy way,
My heart makes haste to obey thy word,
And suffers no delay,
If once I wander from thy path,
I think upon my ways.
Then turn my feet to thy commands,
And trust thy pard'ning grace.

Now I am thine, for ever thine;
O save thy servant, Lord;
Thou art my shield, my hiding place,
My hope is in thy word.
Thou hast inclin'd this heart of mine
Thy statutes to fulfil;
And thus till mortal life shall end,
Would I perform thy will,

8 March.

(77)

THOU wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength, Isaiah xxvi. 3, 4. Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me, Chap. xxvii. 5.

To enjoy an undisturbed peace, great care is to be taken that we do not look and depend upon any thing in ourselves, since all is but imperfect, and ever will be so. We are to trust only in the lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world, to feed our souls continually in this gospel of peace. and be ever watchful, faithful, quiet and humble: for we never lose any thing of our peace, except it is stolen by some pride or other unguarded affections.

Hence from my soul sad thoughts be gone,
And leave me to my joys;
My tongue shall triumph in my God,
And make a joyful noise.

Darkness and doubts had veil'd my mind,
And drown'd my head in tears,
'Till sov'reign grace with shining rays
Dispell'd my gloomy fears.

Oh, what immortal joys I felt,
And raptures all divine,
When Jesus told me I was His,
And my beloved mine.

In vain the temple frights my soul,
And breaks my peace in vain;
One glimpse, dear Saviour, of thy face
Revives my joys again.

19 March.

(78)

*W*ITH his stripes we are healed, *Isaiah liii. 5.*

O mighty Saviour, preserve me, the weakest of all thy members, in the invincible fortrefs of thy wounds, till I am perfectly whole and fitted to live with thee eternally. It shall be ever my favourite song : I am in Christ and his wounds. I am nothing ; he is my all. In myself I am unclean, yea obominably filthy ; but in him, all is covered and made acceptable and lovely like himself. Therefore his cross is my only glory and resting place.

Here at thy cross, my dying God,
I lay my soul beneath thy love,
Beneath the droppings of thy blood,
Jesus, nor shall it e'er remove.

Should worlds conspire to drive me thence,
Moveless and firm this heart should lie ;
Resolv'd (for that's my last defence)
If I must perish, there to die.

But speak, my Lord, and calm my fear ;
Am I not safe beneath thy shade ?
Thy vengeance will not strike me here,
Nor satan dares my soul invade.

Yes, I'm secure beneath thy blood,
And all my foes shall lose their aim ;
Hosannah to my dying God,
And my best honours to his name.

20 March.

(79)

THOU shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them. I am thy part and thine inheritance, Numb. xviii. 20.

Who has and loves the Lord Jesus, finds unspeakably more delight, honour, and riches in him, than in all other things. Then all is willingly denied for his sake, and this denial springs from faith. Now, O Lord! thou art my all also, and to draw near to thee is my greatest happiness. This shall be my treasure and portion that thou lovest me, and I love thee eternally and keep thy statutes.

Lord, what a thoughtless wretch was I
To mourn, and murmur, and repine,
To see the wicked plac'd on high,
In pride and robes of honour shine.
But, O their end, their dreadful end!
Thy sanctuary taught me so;
On slipp'ry rocks I see them stand,
And fiery billows roll below.

Now let them boast how tall they rise,
I'll never envy them again;
There they may stand with haughty eyes,
Till they plunge deep in endless pain.
Now I esteem their mirth and wine,
Too dear to purchase with my blood;
Lord, 'tis enough that thou art mine,
My life, my portion, and my God.

21 March.

(80)

MAKE haste to help me, O God of my salvation, Psal. xxxviii. 23. Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation. xxxv. 3. Divine answer. Fear not for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right-hand of my righteousness. For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right-hand, and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shall glory in the holy one of Israel, Isaiah xli. 10, 13, 16.

This shews that believers are not always without fear, yet it is much better for them. than presumption. Many of the primitive christians presented themselves to martyrdom, but shrunk at the trial: others were afraid to fall away, and yet went undauntedly through the torments. This was the case with many of the *Bohemian* brethren, who frequently used to say: "The torture should be their breakfast, and the faggot-pile their dinner;" and yet fell away also. And so God always punishes presumption.

God shall preserve my soul from fear,
Or shield me when afraid;
Ten thousand angels must appear
If he command their aid.
I cast my burdens on the Lord,
The Lord sustains them all;

My courage rests upon his word,
That saints shall never fall.
My highest hopes shall not be vain,
My lips shall spread his praise;
While cruel and deceitful men
Scarce live out half their days.

22 March.

(81)

EVERY man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things: now they do it to obtain a corruptable crown, and we an incorruptable, 1 Cor. ix. 25. For, He that overcometh shall inherit all things, Rev. xxi. 7.

To be only an almost christian, is a very hard thing: but to be a christian altogether makes all easy and pleasant. And such as desire to have the whole Christ, his whole salvation and all what is his, must needs give themselves up to him, not only in part, but wholly again according to that fundamental and most reasonable rule: "All for all." And as far as we deny him any thing, we make ourselves unhappy; but the more we are resigned to him, the more we are fit to enjoy him and his spiritual blessings.

Many would sooner be persuaded to follow Christ, if it was enough to serve him by halves, and reserve some things to themselves. But what could that profit them? Christ will not be bargain'd with; and nothing more dangerous than the dividing our hearts between him and the world, or waiting from time to time for a more convenient season to break through. Thus you may live many years, and be neither cold nor hot; and so at last be spued out of the Lord's mouth. Consider this well, O ye double-minded lukewarm souls! christianity requires great striving and overcoming all things, even our most favourite and darling lust. Rouse therefore thy drowsy heart; spare thyself no longer; rise above the trifles of this world; fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art called.

F

23 March.

(82)

A New commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another, John xiii. 34.

All commandments of God are commandments of love, tending to our real good and great happiness, far from being grievous to those who have faith and love; the practice thereof is life and peace. The world may think it a grievous burden; but this is a great mistake indeed. Sin is grievous. In hatred, envy, anger, revenge, pride, there is nothing but torment and slavery; but in love there is a sweet rest and pleasure. Thus a sinner always punishes himself, and is robbed of great peace and blessings by transgressing the commandments of God.

Saviour, look down with pitying eyes,
Our jarring wills control;
Let cordial, kind affections rise,
And harmonize the soul.
Subdue in us the carnal mind,
Its enmity destroy,

With cords of love th' old ADAM bind,
And melt him into joy.
Us into closest union draw,
And in our inward parts
Let kindness sweetly write her law,
Let love command our hearts.

24 March.

(83)

ONE thing is needful. And Mary has chosen that good part, which shall never be taken away from her, Luke x. 42.

We must not pretend to serve God with only going to church and doing other acts of outward devotion : whilst we are dead and cold, our religion is vain. Who first, by faith seeks grace from the words of Christ, like Mary, is served by Christ, and this constrains him to serve him and his neighbour readily again. It is almost impossible for such to go on in haughtiness, envy, hatred and disobedience. Grace and Faith will resist it, and make them lowly, gentle, willing, obedient, active, without relying on any works of their own.

He that obtains Christ, the one thing needful, receives with him all the rest, and has no more need to be troubled about many things; he being our all, we can always live happy, whereas the children of this world must always be cumbered and divided between fears and hopes about their fate. In vanity we shall never find this good part; neither is there any salvation in the works of the law. Faith alone takes hold of it. And whoever withdraws his heart and senses from the noise and bustle of this world, and quietly looks for salvation in the wounds of Christ, the blessed fountains of blood and water, will certainly find it his better part.

25 March.

(84)

PURGE me with byssop and I shall be clean. wash me and I shall be whiter than snow, Ps. li. 7. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities, ver. ii. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool, Isa. i. 18. I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins: return unto me, for I have redeemed thee, Chap. xlv. 22.

We must not keep away from Christ on account of our stumblings and manifold faults, if we will not come under the law again: but by humbling ourselves directly we are to crave pardon in his blood: by delaying this, our case will be worse. But the sooner it is done, the sooner we shall be forgiven. The Lord not imputing those sins to us, which are sincerely repented of, our soul returns to its rest again. And instead of falling into carnal security (as some may think) it will rather strengthen our faith and make us more confident. Hasten! therefore, and come as soon and as well as thou canst. He will receive thee, if thou couldst but creep.

O Lord, I fall before thy face;
My only refuge is thy grace:
No bleeding beast, nor flood, nor sea,
Can wash the dismal stain away.

Jesus, my God, thy blood alone,
Has pow'r sufficient to atone;
Thy blood can make me white as snow;
No Jewish types could cleanse me so.

26 March.

(85)

DELIVER us from evil, Mat. vi. 13. Divine answer. *Fear not, for I have redeemed thee ; I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee : When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt ; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee, Isa. xliii. 1, 2. Christ has by his own blood once entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us, Heb. ix. 12.*

This redemption is the ground that we are delivered daily, and at last shall be delivered from all evil. Who hates and detests not only the evil of punishment, but especially the evil of sin itself, and so earnestly pants after the Redeemer, has faith already, and sin has lost its dominion. And though he may be tempted with it severely, yet he is under the law no more ; for the reigning power of sin being broke, the law has lost its condemning power also, and we may be sure of a continual, nay eternal redemption. We may often feel the evil, but be as often delivered from it also.

Thy solemn vows are on me, Lord,
Thou shalt receive my praise ;
I'll sing ; " How faithful is thy word ;
" How righteous all thy ways. F 3

Thou hast secur'd my soul from death,
O set thy pris'ners free !
That heart and hand, and life and breath,
May be employ'd for thee.

27 March.

(86)

S T I R up the gift of God which is in thee, 2 Tim. i. 6. Psal. lxii. 8. 2 Sam. vii. 18, 28.

How can this be done? Answer. By looking as well upon thy own great poverty and wants, as upon the riches of grace, which is in Christ for thee, and so drawing near to God, through him in faith. But it is not enough to do this once for all, or now and then only. It is to be thy daily work. One day's omission may greatly hurt thy soul. Especially the morning hours are very proper for this purpose. These must directly be laid hold on to converse with God in prayers, before we meddle with any thing else in our business, though ever so needful and important, for fear of being intangled and distracted perhaps the whole day. And to gather the more strength, draw as near to Christ as possible, and even wrestle with him, as if it was the last time. Pour out thy whole heart before him; not giving over too soon; but be instant in thy supplications, at least with continual inward groanings, till thy heart burns within thee, and thou feelest the quickening influence of his grace and Spirit. Then great care is to be taken to preserve this blessing and strength in a quiet and well-composed mind, examining thyself frequently, especially at nights, how the day has been spent.

I'll lift my hands, I'll raise my voice,
While I have breath to pray or praise;

This work shall make my heart rejoice,
And spend the remnant of my days.

28 March.

(87)

VANITY of vanities, all is vanity, Eccles. i. 2.

Not only foolish doings in state and trade, and other filthy cares and pleasures, are vain; but great knowledge and sciences also, in which we aim only at our own glory; and even the most specious works, unless they are done in Christ from the right principle of faith and love, fall under this denomination.

Man has a soul of vast desires,
He burns within with restless fires;
Toss'd to and fro, his passions fly
From vanity to vanity.

In vain on earth we hope to find
Some solid good to fill the mind:
We try new pleasures, but we feel
The inward thirst and torment still.

So when a raging fever burns;
He shifts from side to side by turns;
And 'tis a poor relief we gain,
To change the place but keep the pain.
Great God! subdue this vicious thirst,
This love to vanity and dust;
Cure the vile fever of the mind,
And feed our souls with joys refin'd.

F 4

29 March.

(88)

I *T is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. It is good that he bear the yoke in his youth, Lament. iii 26, 27. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory, Col. iii. 3, 4. In rest shall ye be saved, in quietness shall be your strength, Isaiah xxx. 15.*

Lord, I stand in continual need of thy help; but thy desire to help me is greater than mine own. For it is said, 'I will not turn away from them, yea I will rejoice over them, to do them good, Jer. xxxii. 40, 41. O give me but faith and patience to wait for thy help, which always comes in the best season.

I to my God my ways commit,
And chearful wait his will;
Thy hand which guides my doubtful feet,
Shall my desires fulfil.
Mine innocence shalt thou display,
And make thy judgments known;

Fair as the light of dawning day,
And glorious as the noon.
The meek at last the earth possess,
And are the heirs of heav'n.
True riches, with abundant peace,
To humble souls are giv'n.

30 March.

(89)

T H E grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, towards ourselves : righteously, towards others : and godly, towards God : in this present world. Not only hereafter in heaven. Tit. ii. 11, 12.

Some pretend to be very evangelical, and under the colour of avoiding their own workings and legal doings, fall into dangerous excesses and licentiousness. But true evangelical grace lays a strict restraint on all our sensual lusts, and prevents us from sliding out either into the broad way of the world, or into spiritual pride ; real grace making us humble, careful and serious.

It is not lawful for christians to enjoy the pleasures of the world. They have nothing to do with its dancings, plays, and other carnal sports and jokes. This would dry up their spirit, and be quite inconsistent with the cross of Christ, and the character of the militant church. Does not dancing and gaming belong to the lust of the world ? is not this plainly forbidden here ? can it then be any thing but sin ? couldst thou pray and die in such a disposition ? surely not. Will not the noise of the company follow thee into thy cloister, and make thee unfit to prayers, even a good while after ? and what comfort dost thou hope to draw from these pleasures in the hour of death ?

Almighty God turn off their eyes
From these alluring vanities ;

And let the thunder of thy word
Awake their souls to fear the Lord,

31 March.

(90)

I T is enough now, O Lord, take away my life, 1 Kings xix. 4. Divine Answer. Mine hour is not yet come, John xi. 4.

Here I offer myself, O Lord, to thy own disposal, without exception, to work, to suffer, to live and to die, as thou thinkest fit. Receive me and my household as thy property. Let us be used as instruments in thy hands, to be employed where. how, and to what purpose thou pleasest. I don't desire to have any power over myself; I know it would be only to my great disadvantage and vexation, whereas I can be easy and may firmly believe, that all will go well with me, and I shall at last be saved eternally, if I am intirely surrendered to thee.

Behold thy waiting servant, Lord,
Devoted to thy fear;
Remember and confirm thy word,
For all my hopes are there.
Hast thou not writ salvation down,
And promis'd quick'ning grace?
Doth not my heart adrefs thy throne?
And yet thy love delays.

Mine eyes for thy salvation fail,
O bear thy servant up;
Nor let the scoffing lips prevail,
Who dare reproach my hope.
Didst thou not raise my faith, O Lord?
Then let thy truth appear;
Saints shall rejoice in my reward,
And trust as well as fear,

1 April.

(91)

It is finished, John xix. 30.

O Lord suffer me not to be lull'd into a false rest till all be finished,
But grant that by true faith I may always take up my Abode and resting
place in thy wounds, and most perfect work on the cross; since I
want nothing more than always to know myself justified in thee. In
thee I am perfect already.

I'll sing my Saviour's wond'rous death,
He conquer'd when he fell :
'Tis finish'd, said his dying breath,
And shook the gates of hell.
'Tis finish'd our Emanuel cries,
The dreadful work is done ;
Hence shall his sov'reign throne arise,
His kingdom is begun.

'Twas for my sins my dearest Lord
Hung on the cursed tree,
And groan'd away a dying life
For thee, my soul, for thee.
His cross a sure foundation laid
For glory and renown,
When thro' the regions of the dead
He pass'd to reach the crown.

2 April.

(92)

GOD forbid, that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world, Gal. vi. 14.

A true believer has nothing to glory in, but Christ only. Even in his very best performances he will be often deeply humbled, and cry out, Lord, enter not into judgement. And well he may; for the ground of our glory, comfort and salvation is not in works, but in Christ and the free grace of God, who for his Son's sake lays nothing to our charge, but richly and daily covers and pardons all our iniquities. And thus we may always be preserved in true rest and solid peace; for the cross of Christ is a true, solid and unmoveable foundation.

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the prince of glory dy'd,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.
Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God:
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o'er his body on the tree;
Then I am dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.
Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small:
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

3 April.

(93)

AND they shall be unto you cities of refuge (these are the wounds of Christ :) from the avenger, Numb. xxxv. 12. There we have a strong city, salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks, Isaiah xxvi. 1. Therefore take heed of coming without the borders of this your city of refuge.

What is once done amiss cannot be altered any more, neither can we nor shall we make satisfaction for it by particular degrees of grief and agonies. This Christ has done already. Sometimes we are hindered to lay hold on his atonement by subtle pride and self-righteousness, and we had better directly to accuse ourselves and to confess our guilt, but at the same time to flee to the wounds of Christ, and to offer the ransom of his blood for our trespasses to the offended God. O Lord, grant that I may always look upon the debts of my sins as actually paid and forgiven, and so always fight against and conquer them by faith.

Jesus the vision of thy face
Hath over-pow'ring charms !
Scarce shall I feel death's cold embrace,
If Christ be in my arms.

Then will you hear my heartstrings break ;
How sweet my minutes roll ?
A mortal paleness on my cheek,
And glory in my soul.

4 April.

(94)

HE shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root, Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit, *Isaiah xxvii. 6.* They shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward, *Chap. xxxvii. 31.* They shall bring forth fruit in an old age: they shall be fat and flourishing *Psal xcii. 14, 15.* Her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of draught, neither shall cease from yielding fruit. *Jerem. xvii 8.*

True evangelical christians look upon themselves as the most barren trees, ever crying out, O my leanness! my leanness! Even before the judgment seat of Christ they know of no fruits, *Matth. xxv. 37, 38, 39.* The reason is, they are poor in spirit, and are not pleased with their fruits, but only with Christ. O Lord, grant that I may desire not only earnestly, but singly also, to bring forth more fruits, and that I may grow in fruitfulness as I grow in years; so as to be ever green, and never ceasing from yielding fruits in my old age, fruits which may last to all eternity.

Lord'tis a pleasant thing to stand
In gardens planted by thine hand;
Let me within thy courts be seen,
Like a young cedar fresh and green.
There grow thy saints in faith and love,
Blest with thy influence from above;

Time that doth all things else impair,
Still makes them flourish strong and fair,
Laden with fruits of age they shew,
The Lord is holy, just and true;
None that attend his gates shall find
A God unfaithful or unkind.

5 April.

(95)

THE breaker is come up before them; they have broken up and have passed through the gate, and their king (as the Author and finisher of faith) shall pass before them, and the Lord on the head of them, Micah ii. 13. Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world, John xvi. 33. Heb. xii. 1, 2.

Sometimes the enemy seems to get an advantage over us, but the battle is not over yet. At last thou shalt have the victory, and carry the day for all that. In hard struggles remember the power of Christ, who in his resurrection broke thro' every thing. With him thou canst also break through, and be more than conqueror. Yea, in every conflict thou canst be sure of the victory beforehand; for his victory is thy victory also. It is as impossible for thine enemies to keep thee always in bonds and subjection, as impossible it was that Christ could be kept in the grave by the stone, seal and keepers. Nay, the greater their force is, the more glorious will be the victory.

Hosanna to our conqu'ring king!

The prince of darkness flies,
His troops rush headlong down to hell,
Like light'ning from the skies

There bound in chains the lions roar,
And fright the rescu'd sheep;
But heavy bars confine their pow'r
And malice to the deep.

Hosanna to our conqu'ring king!

All hail incarnate love!
Ten thousand songs and glories wait
To crown thy head above.

Thy vict'ries and thy deathless fame
Thro' the wide world shall run,
And everlasting ages sing
The triumphs thou hast won.

6 April.

(96)

BUT unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings, and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall, Mal. iv. 2. If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God, John xi. 40. Against hope be believed in hope, Rom. iv. 18.

He that pretends to see and comprehend every thing beforehand with his own natural reason, shuts his eyes against the sun of righteousness, and can never learn to see rightly by faith. This is downright unbelief; and unbelief is the source of all sins, tho' it is hardly believed. Hundreds being asked, whether they are in faith, they will all answer in the affirmative, tho' there is not so much as the least beginning of it : since they are without the necessary hunger and thirst after righteousness; they want that broken heart to which the Lord has given the promise of faith alone; neither have they ever pray'd for it earnestly; whereas LUTHER and all other faithful witnesses say, " We must needs first ardently pray to God for faith, else we shall be faithless to all eternity". But this done we may say, Lord, I have long prayed, and am still praying for faith, consequently I am in the same.

Our guilty souls are drown'd in tears,
Till Christ's atoning blood appears;
Then we awake from deep distress,
And sing the Lord our righteousness.

Our very frame is mix'd with sin,
His Spirit makes our natures clean;
Such virtues from his suff'rings flow,
At once to cleanse and pardon too.

7 April.

(97)

LET your moderation be known unto all men, Phil. iv. 5. For charity, that is love, edifieth, 1 Cor. viii. 1.

If thou rebukest others and wouldst have them to be like thee, thou oughtest to examine thyself first, whether it flows from a blind party-zeal, impatience, and self-will, or from a true principle of love; and whether thou art also much in prayers for them, both before and after. Who lays the long-sufferings of God truly to heart, and considers how gently he has treated him, and still treats him, like the weakest child, must needs be moderate also towards all men, and think, 'if no body 'wou'd bear with others, surley I must,' he must always pray: Lord! give me the right spirit of meekness, to shew all lenity to my fellow-christians.

Watch o'er my lips, and guard them, Lord,
From every rash and heedless word;
Nor let my feet incline to tread
The guilty path where sinners lead.
O may the righteous when I stray,
Smile and reprove my wand'ring way!

Their gentle words, like ointment shed,
Shall never bruise but cheer my head.
When I behold them prest with grief,
I'll cry to heaven for their relief;
And by my warm petitions prove
G How much I prize their faithful love.

8 April.

(98)

PUT *thou my tears into thy bottles ; are they not in thy book ?* Psal. vi. 9.
Divine answer. *They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. He that goes forth and weeps, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him,* Psal. cxxvi. 5, 6.

If thou canst reap yet and sing the hymns of joy and triumph, remember that this belongs more to the future, than to this present world. Here sorrow and faith can be united. Thine enemies have not left and given thee over yet. There is no retreat from the field of battle, before the hour of death. Let this be a cheer to thine impatient heart. But must thou be humbled under the sense of thy misery, so as to fight, grone and weep very often, consider that this is the very seed for eternity. Not a single tear and grone will be lost. They are all in the book of the Lord.

God counts the sorrows of his saints,

Their groines affect his ears ;

He has a book for their complaints,

A bottle for their tears.

The Lord can clear the darkest skies,

Can give us day for night ;

Make drops of sacred sorrow rise,

To rivers of delight.

Let those that sow in sadness wait

Till the fair harvest come ;

They shall confess their shaves are great,

And shout the blessings home,

9 April

(99)

FLEE from sin, as thou wouldst flee from a serpent ; for if thou comest near it, it will sting thee, Ecclus. xxi. 2, 3 *Narrow is the way that leadeth unto life*, Matth. vii. 14. Therefore, follow holiness, in this way, without which no man shall see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14.

This advice properly be'ongs to saints and true believers ; for even these have need still to be warned against sin and stirred up to more holiness. How dangerous then must be the conditon, and what will become of those, who have not followed holiness at all, but followed only the love of money, pleasures and honours, and made a mock of holiness. These go the broad way indeed, whatever moral honesty they may seem to have ; for it is a true saying : ' Either a saint or a beast, and consequently a brand of hell.'

Ye sons of ADAM, vain and young,
Indulge your eyes, indulge your tongue,
Taste the delights your souls desire,
And give a loose to all your fire.
Pursue the pleasure you design,
And chear your hearts with songs and wine,
Enjoy the day of mirth, but know
There is a day of judgment too.

G 2

God from on high beholds your thoughts,
His book records your secret faults ;
The works of darkness you have done
Must all appear before the sun.
The vengeance to your follies due
Should strike your hearts with terror thro' ;
How will you stand before his face,
Or answer for his injur'd grace ?

10 April.

(100)

LEAD us not into temptation, Matth. vi. 13. Divine answer. *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it,* 1 Cor. x. 13. Psal. lxxvii. 2. Compared with the beautiful words, Ecclus. 1, 13.

The nearer to heaven, the higher the mountains, the deeper the valleys, and the sharper the conflicts. But be not discouraged! it is only for the trial of our faith. God gives also more strength, carrieth us thro' all, as he has done from the beginning, and suffers none to be ashamed who trust in him. Sometimes we may seem to be tempted above measure, and are afraid of being confounded; but far from it, 'tis quite impossible we should. Here thou hast the plain words of the Lord. Take hold on them, and wait his time; for since the world stands, none has been confounded in any thing who has waited for his promise; and surely he will not make thee the first instance of the failure of his word; by no means, PHIL. i. 10. ISAIAH liv. 10. Rather should the mountains depart, and the hills be removed, says the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.

Our God, how firm his promise stands,
Ev'n when he hides his face!
He trusts in our Redeemer's hands
His glory and his grace.
Then why, my soul, these sad complaints,
Since Christ and we are one?

Thy God is faithful to his saints,
Is faithful to his Son.
Beneath his smiles my heart has liv'd,
And part of heav'n possess'd;
Praise his name for grace receiv'd,
And trust him for the rest.

11 April.

(101)

O Satisfy us early with thy mercy, Psalm xc. 14. God's answer. Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it, Psalm lxxxi. 10. For, my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, Jerem. xxxi. 14. The river of God is full of water, Psalm lxxv. 9. With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation, Isaiah xii. 13. This is the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, Zech. xiii. 1.

O! soul, keep close to the gospel; there is the fulness here spoken of: food and raiment, and every thing in plenty. Let not the law hinder thee from eating, drinking, rejoicing and adorning thyself, Isa. lv. 1--3. 10--12. The law, as one justly observes, brings in a great bill, but nothing wherewith to discharge it. It sets the soul a working, but so as to neglect the proper nourishments necessary for it. No wonder therefore, that she is destitute of sufficient strength, that she faints and comes never to the right mark. There is no such a thing as making amends by the law: We must go directly to Christ, and receive first the grace and strength required, out of his fulness, by faith.

Let ev'ry mortal ear attend,
And ev'ry heart rejoice,
The trumpet of the gospel sounds
With an inviting voice.

Rivers of love and mercy here
In a rich ocean join;
Salvation in abundance flows,
Like floods of milk and wine.

Dear God! the treasures of thy love
Are everlasting mines;
Deep as our helpless miseries are,
And boundless is our sins.

The happy gates of gospel grace
Stand open night and day:
Lord we are come to seek supplies,
And drive our wants away.

12 April.

(102)

FEAR not, daughter of Zion, John xii. 15. But rejoice greatly and shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, behold thy king comes unto thee; he is just, and having salvation, Zech. ix. 9. For the Lord has taken away thy judgments, he has cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the Lord is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more, Zeph. iii. 15. Behold they shall furly gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake, Isaiah liv. 15. Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them, Jerem. xv. 19.

How strong soever thine inward enemies, thy corruptions may be now, fear not and be not discouraged. So much the more, faith faith, thy king is bound by his office, love and promise, to help and assist thee with strength to overcome: and thus, as the ancients said, shall even the hardships of a christian, under his corruptions, be rewarded with a crown. O Lord, grant that I may be always faithful and resolute enough not to spend needlessly too much time in one conflict, but directly putting on the armour of faith, I may soon conquer, press forward and experience thee every hour as a mighty King and Saviour.

My Lord, my Conqu'ror and my King,
Thy sceptre and thy sword I sing;
Thine is the vict'ry, and I sit,
A joyful subject at thy feet.

Great Prophet, let me bless thy name;
By thee the joyful tidings came,
Of wrath appeas'd, of sins forgiv'n,
Of hell subdu'd, and peace with heav'n,

13 April.

(103)

THOU shalt not be afraid of them, but shalt well remember what the Lord thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt, Deut. vii 18. Be ye not terrified because of them, for the Lord your God is he that goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you, Chap. xx. 3, 4. Hitherto shalt thou come and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed, Job. xxxviii. 11.

The assaults of original sin will ever return, and we must not be surprised, when one conflict is over, that another arises. This contest is unavoidable, for the enemy is within us. It makes us more careful and humble to know this, than if we believe that we had only to encounter with sin from without and not from within: and if we desire to feel less evil in us than God suffers us to have, we may look to it, whether it proceeds not sometimes from pride and impatience, that we wish'd to get rid of the trouble of striving always against sin; whereas it should be enough for us, that God suffers it, lays it not to our charge, and carries us through all dangers.

Let the redeemed of the Lord
The wonders of his grace record;
Israel, the nation whom he chose,
And rescu'd from their mighty foes.

He feeds and clothes us all the way;
He guides our footsteps lest we stray;
He guards us with a pow'ful hand,
And brings us to the heav'nly land.

G 4

14 April.

(104)

VERILY thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel the Saviour!
Isaiah xlv. 15. *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, Psal.*
xxv. 10. *The Lord of hosts is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working,*
Isa. xxviii. 29.

God is wonderful in all his doings, his ways are past finding out; at the end we can see best, what wise and gracious steps he took with us. Therefore when things take such a wonderful turn that we are quite at our wits end, and do not know which way to go, we may believe the hand of the Lord is in it, and some good will come of it at last. As we experience the name of Christ to be wonderful at such times, we may well expect that he will shew himself to be our counsellor and mighty God also. At first every thing may seem to be against us and go quite contrary; but at last we see plainly, that it was highly needful it should go contrary to our corrupt nature, and that thus it went well. For tho' the ways of God are marvellous, yet they are glorious.

Lord, we adore thy vast designs,
Th' obscure abyss of Providence,
Too deep to sound with mortal lines,
Too dark to view with feeble sense.
Now thou array'st thine awful face
In angry frowns, without a smile:

We through the cloud, believe thy grace,
Secure thy compassion still.
Dear Father if thy lifted rod
Resolve to scourge us here below;
Still we must lean upon our God,
Thine arm shall bear us safely through.

15 April.

(105)

VERILY he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, (as upon the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world) and with his stripes we are healed, Isaiah liii. 4, 5. Thus Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, 1 Cor. v. 7.

Under a continual sense of our misery, we must have our eyes of faith immoveably fixed upon Christ the Lamb of God, and believe ourselves to be ever justified and healed by his stripes; continually saying, this sin and this punishment is also taken away. In Christ I am without sin, and need not fear the least condemnation at all. This keeps us in peace. O Lord help us, for as yet we are but weak babes.

How condescending and how kind
Was God's eternal Son,
Our mis'ry reach'd his heav'nly mind,
And pity brought him down.
When justice, by our sins provok'd,
Drew forth its dreadful sword;
He gave his soul up to the stroke,
Without a murmur'ing word.

Now we receive repeated seals
Of Jesus' dying love:
Hard is the wretch that never feels -
One soft affection move.
Oh, let our hearts begin to melt,
While we his death record,
And, with our joy for pardon'd guilt,
Mourn that we pierc'd the Lord.

16 April.

(106)

16 April 21

Remember me, O my God, for good, Neh. xiii. 31. Divine answer.
Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him: I will surely have mercy upon him, Jer. xxxi. 29. A book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name, Mal. iii. 16, 17, 18. I know the thoughts which I have towards you, Jerem. xxix. 11.

As soon as I appear with my prayers before the Lord, he writes all my petitions upon his book of remembrance. Should I not pray much? Yes, O Lord, and though I have many things already upon thy book, yet will I give thee occasion to write down more and more every hour. Thus nothing can be forgotten. All will be granted by him. Delays we must expect, but all shall be made up with so much larger gifts, in due time, though the best will be reserved for a blissful eternity.

Now let the Lord my Saviour smile,
And shew my name upon his heart;
I would forget my pains awhile,
And in the pleasure lose the smart.
My name is printed on his breast;
His book of life contains my name:

I'd rather have it there impress'd,
Than in the bright records of fame.
When the vast fire burns all things here,
Those letters shall securely stand,
And in the Lamb's fair book appear,
Writ by th' eternal Father's hand.

17 April.

(107)

O Remember not against us former iniquities, Psal. lxxix. 8. The sins of our youth ; thus sins long forgiven may revive again in the heart. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us, Mat. vi. 10. Divine answer. None of his sins which he has committed shall be mentioned unto him, Ezek. xxxiii. 16. Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passes by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage ? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delights in mercy ; he will have compassion upon us : He will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea, Micah vii. 18, 19.

The weakest christian, who is full of fears and doubts, by sincerely praying the fifth petition of the Lord's prayer, may be convinced that his sins are actually pardoned ; for both the forgiveness and the full assurance of it are comprehended in the same : and since he prays according to the will of God, and forgives them that trespass against him, it shews that the work of sanctification is begun in his heart also ; and tho' at present it be but very weak and imperfect, yet it evidences his faith ; and the Lord has often used this evidence, and still may use it, to convince souls, for the first time, to be actually in faith and a state of grace. Who can hinder him from doing this, or even prove the contrary of it ? for this is not making sanctification the foundation of forgiveness of sin ; but Christ is, and ever will be, the foundation of it ; and a great difference there is between grounding myself upon something, and between trying my faith in a state of darkness and uncertainty, by such marks as the Lord himself has appointed.

O thou that hearest when sinners cry,
Tho' all my crimes before thee lie,
Behold them not with angry look,
But blot their mem'ry from thy book.

O may thy love inspire my tongue,
Salvation shall be all my song ;
And all my pow'rs shall join to bless
The Lord my strength and righteousness.

18 April.

(108)

REmember from whence thou art fallen, Rev. ii. 5.

When we have stumbled, it chiefly proceeded from unbelief; therefore instead of disputing long with ourselves, we must stir up our hearts so much more to faith; and before we go on, seek first with a humble sense of our guilt and weakness, new pardon and strength in Christ; and afterwards keep close and steadfastly to him also by faith, like a weak child, to draw from him alone all necessary virtues evermore. Thus we shall be preserved by him from falling again.

O could we call to mind the grace,
The glorious grace from which we fell;
Live o'er again the ancient days,
And do the works thou lov'st so well!
O that we might thro' thee repent,
And timely turn to thee and live!
So should thy grace our doom prevent,
Thou wouldst abundantly forgive.

Before thou dost in vengeance come,
Our candlestick far off remove,
And fix th' unalterable doom;
O let us weep, believe, and love.
Call on us, by thy spirit call;
Yet once again our church restore;
Shew us thy grace is over all,
And lift us up to fall no more.

19 April.

(109)

ESCAPE for thy life, and look not behind thee, Gen. xix. 17. *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life,* Rev. ii. 10.

When there is a fire, people in general run to extinguish it and to save what they can ; O that we would all run so, to save our souls and the souls of others from hell-fire, and to obtain the crown of glory ! O Lord, give us more zeal and watchfulness, and suffer us not to stand still and draw insensibly back to perdition ; but let our whole life be a continual preparation to meet our blessed bridegroom. Amen and Amen.

The fulness of eternal bliss

We shall from thee receive above,
This the reward of conquests, this
The crown of all victorious love.

Conqueror of sin, and hell, and death,
As thou the dreadful fight hast won,
And wearest now th' immortal wreath,
And sittest on thy Father's throne.

So that thou grant to all that fight,
And conquer in thy mighty name,
To claim the kingdom as their right,
Their suff'rings and their crown the same.
Who bore thy cross shall wear thy crown,
Shall triumph in thy victory,
And in thy glorious throne sit down,
And reign in endless bliss with thee.

20 April.

(110)

MY Son give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways, Prov. xxiii. 26.

By giving the whole, that is, thy heart, to the Lord Jesus, not only every part of thy duty will be facilitated. but whatever thou dost to his glory, great or small, will be equally acceptable to him. Therefore the language of a believer is, 'My Lord and my God, I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine, and his desire is towards me,' Cant. vi. 3. and vii. 10. Thou being mine, what can I want? I being thine, how can I deny thee any thing?

My worthless heart to gain,
The God of all that breathe
Was found in fashion as a man,
And died a cursed death.
And can I yet delay
My little all to give,
To tear my soul from earth away,
For Jesus to receive?
Nay, but I yield, I yield!
I can hold out no more,

I sink by dying love compell'd,
And own thee conqueror,
Come and possess me whole,
Nor hence again remove;
Settle, and fix my wav'ring soul
With all thy weight of love.
My life, my portion thou,
Thou all-sufficient art,
My hope, my heav'nly treasure, now
Enter, and keep my heart.

21 April.

(III)

If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself, 2 Tim. ii. 13. Isa. l. 7, 10. Chap. xlii. 3. Rom. x. 13. Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled, Matt. v. 6.

Whoever has such a hungering and thirsting heart, desiring grace above all things, calling upon the name of the Lord, and depending only upon Christ, has a justifying faith already, and is in a state of salvation, tho' as yet he has not the full assurance of it. This is a fruit of the former, but is not always enjoyed so soon, nor constantly, at least not without hard conflicts.

Jesu, if still the same thou art,

If all thy promises are sure,

Set up thy kingdom in my heart,

And make me rich, for I am poor.

To me be all thy treasures given,

The kingdom of an inward heav'n,

Where is the blessedness bestow'd?

On all that hunger after thee?

I hunger now, I thirst for God!

See, the poor fainting sinner, see,

And satisfy with endless peace,

And fill me with thy righteousness.

Lord, I believe the promise sure,

And trust thou wilt not long delay;

Hungry, and sorrowful, and poor,

Upon thy word myself I stay;

Into thine hands my a'l resign,

And wait till all thou art is mine.

22 April.

(112)

G O D, *who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quicken'd us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved) and has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,* Eph. ii. 4, 5, 6.

Christ being our head, who are his members, are together with him dead, buried, raised up, and seated in heavenly places; for he is the new Adam, and has done all these things as our representative in our stead and for our good. Thus have I suffered in thee, O my glorious head, for all my sins already, I am discharged, I have no punishment to fear any more. Thou hast fully answered the charge against me, satisfied the infinite justice of God for me; and it is impossible with his equity and love to require a double payment of my debts. Consequently I die no more, since thou canst die no more; nay, I live already, and have my place with thee eternally in heaven, since the head can, and will never part, even with the weakest of his members, but influence and draw it after him wherever he goes.

O Lord, we praise thee for thy Son,
Who join'd our nature to his own:
ADAM the second, from the dust,
Raises the ruins of the first.
By the rebellion of one man
Through all his seed the mischief ran;

And by one man's obedience now
Are all his seed made righteous too.
Where sin did reign and death abound,
There have the sons of Adam found
Abounding life; there glorious grace
Reigns thro' the Lord our righteousness.

23 April.

(113)

GOD has made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21. But to him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness, Rom. iv. 5.

These are very sweet and precious words to those who look upon their own best virtues and performances by nature as sinful, and upon their best condition by grace, as extremely weak and imperfect. How comfortable a thing is the justification of the ungodly by faith, when the soul is first stript quite naked before God, and thoroughly convinced of her wickedness and weakness. This a mere moral and legal man does not meddle with. He pretends to make amends for his former sins, by altering his course and doing better works: but this is not making amends at all, since we are but unprofitable servants and want continually forgiveness of sin, even when we have done all. We never have any reason to justify ourselves before God, tho' we should do ever so well, and suffer ever so innocently in regard to men. For from it there is but one way to be justified, and to obtain and preserve the blessing of a good conscience, which is, by humbling and confessing ourselves guilty, and looking only for forgiveness and righteousness in Christ. Thus we are made by him the righteousness of God itself. May the Lord put us all in this way.

No more, my God, I boast no more
Of all the duties I have done;
I quit the hopes I held before,
To trust the merits of thy Son.
Yes, I must and will esteem
All things but loss for Jesus' sake:

O may my soul be found in him,
And of his righteousness partake.
The best obedience of my hands
Dares not appear before thy throne;
But faith can answer thy demands,
By pleading what my Lord has done.

H

24 April

(114)

GOD has exalted Christ Jesus with his right-hand, to be a prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel and forgiveness of sins, Acts v. 31.

Think not, what reason have I to repent? I am no murderer or robber; for thou art both. By thy sins thou hast murdered the Son of God, and by thy pride robbed God of his own: Therefore, if thy old heart is not changed yet into a new one, and thou feelest some uneasiness on account of thine eternal salvation, great care is to be taken not to mistake it for temptations of the devil; but believe me, that it is the work of Christ who awakens thee, offers thee repentance, and will make thee quite another man. 'He stands at the door and knocks; and if any man will hear his voice and open the door, he will come in to him and sup with him, Rev. iii. 20.

Now Christ will ev'ry want supply,
And fill our hearts with peace;
He gives by covenant and by oath
The riches of his grace.
Our heart, that flinty stubborn thing,
That terrors cannot move,
That fears no threatnings of his wrath,
Shall be dissolv'd by love.

There shall his sacred Spirit dwell,
And deep ingrave his law,
And ev'ry motion of our souls
To swift obedience draw.
Thus will he pour salvation down,
And we shall render praise;
We the dear people of his love,
And he our God of grace.

25 April.

(115)

G O D is not a God of confusion, 1 Cor. xiv. 33. He has made every thing beautiful in its season. Also he has set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God makes from the beginning to the end, Eccles. iii. 11.

O Lord, I am like a little child, knowing neither the beginning or end of my ways ; but thou being my counsellor, I think it my only wisdom to be advised and ruled by thee. O shew me then always thy way in all things, even in the least, that I may never miss to do thy work in due season and due order. Make me such a faithful steward as not to go one inch from thy will, but on all occasions to act and suffer according to thy good pleasure.

Whither, O whether should I fly,
But to my loving Saviour's breast !
Secure within thy arms to lie,
And safe beneath thy wings to rest.
I have no might t' oppose the foe,
But everlasting strength is thine ;
Shew me the way that I should go,
Shew me the path I should decline. H 2

Which shall I leave, and which pursue ?
Thou only my adviser be ;
My God, I know not what to do,
But oh ! mine eyes are fix'd on thee.
Foolish, and impotent, and blind,
Lead me a way I have not known,
Bring me where I my heav'n may find,
The heav'n of lov'ng thee alone.

26 April.

(116)

NOW be who stablisheth us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, is God; who has also sealed us and given us the earnest of the spirit in our hearts, 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. Eph. i. 14.

A sensible joy of faith, and great delight in prayer, are not the only evidences of this earnest and sealing of the spirit; these sometimes are wanting; but we may know also, to be sealed by these marks, that we receive Christ in all his offices, that we have a sincere desire to do only the will of God in all things, that we hate sin irreconcilably, that we are humbled, convinced and led into all truths by the spirit. These are constant marks even for the weakest.

Why should the children of a king
Go mourning all their days?
Great Comforter descend and bring
Some tokens of thy grace.
Dost thou not dwell in all the saints,
And seal the heirs of heav'n?
When wilt thou banish my complaints,
And shew my sins forgiven?

Affure my conscience of her part
In the Redeemer's blood;
And bear thy witness with my heart,
That I am born of God.
Thou art the earnest of his love,
The pledge of joy to come;
And thy soft wings, celestial Dove,
Will safe convey me home.

27 April.

(117)

GOD be merciful to me a sinner, Luke xviii. 13. Look upon my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins, Psal. xxv. 18. Divine answer. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, and of great mercy; the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works, Psal. cxlv. 8, 9. Therefore, my sin be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee, Matth. ix. 2.

Justification or remission of sins before the tribunal of God, and the comfortable assurance of it in the heart, do not always go together. The sentence of pardon may be passed, and the sense of it be a wanting for a time, or consist only in some feeble glimpses now and then. The former is done all at once, in the most perfect manner; the latter is given by degrees, as far as believers are able to receive it: Therefore a penitent soul must converse much with the gospel, and pray continually for more light and a greater degree of faith and peace.

O God of mercy, hear my call;
My loads of guilt remove;
Break down this separating wall,
That bars me from my love.
Give me the presence of thy grace;
Then my rejoicing tongue

Shall speak aloud thy righteousness,
And make thy praise my song.
A soul oppress'd with sin's desert
My God will ne'er dispise;
A humble groane, a broken heart
Is our best sacrifice.

H 3

28 April.

(118)

*D*elight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart
Psal. xxxvii. 4.

If thou desirest to delight thyself only in the Lord, and art more solicitous for the increase of faith, love and holiness, than temporal happiness; and wouldst even lose the latter, provided there was an addition to the former; this comes not from nature, but is an infallible mark of grace and regeneration; and the Lord shall give thee also the desires of thine heart, and even more than thou desirest.

Nothing can be more foolish, than to harbour one or more secret lusts in our hearts, after we have been once awakened. We must certainly suffer for it; our conscience will check us for it; we cannot enjoy it with half the pleasure as before; our course is hindered, and our peace disturb'd. How much more prudent and profitable then would it be, to forsake all and follow Christ straight, who can only satisfy the desires of our heart! consider this, O my soul! act the wiser part; let thy eye be single; cleave to him alone, when others cleaving to the creatures pretend to serve two masters. Thus thou wilt be able to taste the kisses of his mouth, and the chrystal streams of his comfortable and heavenly love.

Dear Saviour, let thy beauties be
My soul's eternal food;

And grace command my heart away
From all created good,

29 April.

(119)

HEAL we, O Lord, and I shall be healed, Jerem. xvii. 14. Divine answer. I am the Lord that healeth thee, Exod. xv. 26. They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick, Matth. ix. 12. I have seen his ways, and will heal them; Isa. lxii. 18. xlii. 3. and lxi. 1. He healed all that were sick, Matth. viii 15—17.

This was an emblem of his power and grace to heal all spiritual diseases of our souls; tho' ever so desperate and dangerous. Therefore give thyself only up to his cure, he understands thy distemper also, and will certainly restore thee. He has healed a great many already, nay all those who ever desired it, from all their infirmities. Thou canst never be too miserable and bad for him, he is ever willing and able to help. The worse thy case is, the more he will pity thee and have patience. Before we can be made whole; his way is to make us thoroughly sensible of our sickness, and lay our wounds more and more open. But as the physician then is most wanted, we must be the more earnest to implore his help, and he will surely bind us up again and heal us; tho' perhaps not at once, but sometimes slowly and wonderfully, yet thoroughly at last; for he heals ALL, even the most incurable diseases; PsAL. ciii. 3.

Bind up, O Lord, and cheer my soul
With thy forgiving love;
O make my broken spirit whole,
And bid my pains remove.

H 4

Let not thy spirit quite depart,
Nor drive me from thy face;
Create anew my vicious heart,
And fill it with thy grace.

30 April

(120)

LORD, *thou knowest that I love thee*, John xxi. 15. .

This love is the fruit of the love of Christ, and consequently cannot have place till this is shed abroad in our hearts, that we can confidently rest upon it. As in striking a circle one point of the compasses must be kept steady in the centre, if the other shall go right ; so our faith must be immoveably fixed in Christ, in his righteousness, grace and love, if the reciprocal love and sanctification shall follow. But relying only on gifts of sanctification yields no settled peace and assurance, and consequently no strength to walk steadily in love.

Jesu, thy boundless love to me
No thought can reach, no tongue declare:
O knit my thankful heart to thee,
And reign without a rival there.
Thine wholly, thine alone I am:
Be thou alone my constant flame.

O grant that nothing in my soul
May dwell, but thy pure love alone:
O may thy love possess me whole,
My Joy, my treasure, and my crown.
Strange fires far from my soul remove,
My ev'ry act, word, thought, be love.

1 May.

(121)

L O R D, *enter not into judgment with thy servant*, Psal. cxlii. 2 *Divine answer. Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth my voice, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life*, John v. 24. See also John viii. 51. Isaiah xxv. 8.

Since the judge himself is our brother, our bridegroom, the Lord of death and life, yea even our life; believers cannot die any more. but are passed from death unto life, it being impossible that Christ should die again. He that owns the justice of God's judgment, confesses himself guilty in all things, and appeals from the judgment-seat to the mercy-seat, him the Lord will own and justify again through his righteousness of his Son: For 'if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 'We shall even judge together with Christ,' 1 Cor. vi. 2, and surely we will not condemn ourselves; much less will Christ: for he loves us more than we do ourselves.

Who shall the Lord's elect condemn!

'Tis God that justifies their souls,
And mercy like a mighty stream,
O'er all their sins divinely rolls.

Who shall adjudge the saints to hell?

'Tis Christ that suffer'd in their stead;

And the salvation to fulfil,

Behold him rising from the dead.

Faith has an overcoming pow'r.

It triumphs in the dying hour,

Christ is our life, our joy, our hope,

Nor can we sink with such a prop.

2 May.

(122)

GIVE heed to me, O Lord, Jerem xviii. 19. Divine answer. *Behold, be that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep, Psal. cxxi. 4. They that put their trust in him shall understand the truth, and such as be faithful shall remain with him in love, for grace and mercy is to his saints, and he has care for his Elect. Wisd. iii. 9.*

The care of the Lord, which he takes for his little ones, far and infinitely exceeds the care of the most tender mother over her weak and helpless child. Be I then never so weak, miserable and foolish in my own eyes, the Lord being the guardian of such babes, will have patience with me. Nay these are the very vessels of his grace. Therefore considering myself always as a weak ignorant child, I will keep close to him. He is the minister of the sanctuary, and will never let me want any thing, but defend, provide and train me up in the best and most suitable manner.

Be thou my counsellor,
My pattern and my guide;
And tho' this desert land
Still keep me near thy side.
O let my feet
Ne'er run astray,
Nor rove, nor seek
The crooked way.

Should all the hosts of death,
And pow'rs of hell unknown,
Put their most dreadful forms
Of rage and mischief on;
I shall be safe,
For Christ displays
Superior pow'r
And guardian grace.

3 May.

(123)

THE Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. God is love. Who will separate us from the love of God? In all things we are more than conquerors, &c. 1 John iv. 16. Rom. viii. 35, 37.

O my dear Saviour, pour thy love out into my heart by thy holy spirit, that by a true sense and enjoyment of it, I may be able to love thee reciprocally with my whole heart, and do all things singly from a principle of love and gratitude towards thee, I have long prayed for it, O Lord ! thou canst not deny it me ; I must have this petition granted.

Christ died, and lives and sits above,

For ever interceding there :

Who shall divide us from his love,

Or what should tempt us to despair ?

Shall persecution, or distress,

Famine or sword or nakedness ?

He that has lov'd us, bears us thro' ;

And makes us more than conquerors too.

Not all that men on earth can do,

Nor pow'rs on high, nor pow'rs below,

Shall cause his mercy to remove,

Or wean our hearts from God, our love.

4 May.

(124)

*I*N thee, O Lord, do I put my trust, let me never be put to confusion, Psal. lxxi. 1. Christ's intercession: let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake, Psal. lxxix. 6. I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, Luke xxii. 32.

Some say, I have enough of faith; how could I else be a christian? If I could live godly accordingly. But it is just the contrary, godliness is the fruit of faith; and if there was the tree of the heart, the fruit would soon follow. An historical and rational faith is not enough. Was it such an easy matter to believe, what need of Christ's intercession? O my dear Saviour pray for me also, that the gift of faith may be given me, and that I may persevere to the end.

Jesus, the Lord, shall guard me safe
From ev'ry ill design;
And to his heav'nly kingdom keep
This feeble soul of mine.
Mine eyes and my desire
Are ever to the Lord;

I love to plead his promises,
And rest upon his word,
O keep my soul from death,
Nor put my hope to shame,
For I have plac'd my only trust
In my Redeemer's name.

5 May.

(125)

L O R D, teach us so to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom, Psal. xc. 12.

He that does not lay much and seriously to heart the Shortness of his life, and the uncertainty as well as the infinitely important consequences of his death, is not a wise, but a foolish and very inconsiderate man, tho' he was never so great a philosopher and statesman. But the right and true consideration of death must be earnestly prayed for, and this we must do directly without the least delay; for the art of dying well is not so soon and so easily learned.

Thee we adore, eternal name,
And humbly own to thee,
How feeble is our mortal frame,
What dying worms are we!
Dangers stand thick thro' all the ground,
To push us to the tomb;
And fierce diseases wait around,
To hurry mortals home.
Good God! on what a slender thread
Hang everlasting things!

Th' eternal states of all the dead
Upon life's feeble strings.
Infinite joy or endless woe
Attends on ev'ry breath;
And yet how unconcern'd we go
Upon the brink of death!
Waken, O Lord, our drowsy sense
To walk this dang'rous road;
And if our souls are hurry'd hence,
May they be found with God.

6 May.

(126)

O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great. Psal. xxv. 11. Divine answer. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, Rom. v. 20. For God will abundantly pardon, Isaiah lv. 7.

It is all one with God to forgive a repenting sinner his trespasses, whether great or small; many or few; for they are all paid with one ransom. No sin, properly speaking, is little in itself; and none greater than the grace of God, and the infinite price laid down for it. Whatever sins therefore a man feels, yet he may throw himself upon the abounding grace of God. But this grace must always be our comfort, to depend upon it alone, even when it is best for us: for then only it is best with us when we depend alone on grace, and live in it as in our element.

Why does your face, ye humble souls,
Those mournful colours wear?
What doubts are these, that waste your faith,
And nourish your despair?
What tho' your num'rous sins exceed
The stars that fill the skies.
And aiming at th' eternal throne
Like pointed mountains rise!

See here an endless ocean flows
Of never-failing grace;
Behold a dying Saviour's veins
The sacred flood increase:
It rises high, and drowns the hills,
'T has neither shore nor bound:
Now, if we search to find our sins,
Our sins can ne'er be found.

7 May.

(127)

HAVE mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak, Psal. vi. 8. and strengthen me with strength in my soul, Psal. cxxxviii. 3. Divine answer. My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness, 2 Cor. xii. 9. The Lord delights not in the strength of the horse, he takes not pleasure in the legs of a man. The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope for his mercy, Psal. cxlviii. 10, 11. The Lord, our Strength, mighty God and Emanuel, will give strength unto his people, Psal. xxix. 11.

Wherein the soul seems to be weakest, and has the greatest struggle with nature, she may be strongest thro' grace, and come off with a most glorious crown. Therefore judge and despair not of overcoming by the power of God, be there ever so strong and obstinate enemies in thee or in others. I am weak indeed, but Christ is strong; I am poor, he is rich; I sick, he the physician of the sick; I a sinner, he the Saviour of sinners; consequently he suits me, and I suit him extremely well.

Let me but hear my Saviour say,
Strength shall be equal to the day;
Then I rejoice in deep distress,
Leaning on all sufficient grace.
I glory in infirmity,
That Christ's own pow'r may rest on me:

When I am weak, then I am strong,
Grace is my shield, and Christ my song.
I can do all things, or can bear
All suff'rings, if my Lord be there;
Sweet pleasures mingle with the pains,
While his left-hand my head sustains.

8 May.

(128)

HAVE mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak, Psal vi. Divine answer. Fear thou not, let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty, he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy: he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing, Zeph. iii. 16, 17. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the prince of peace, Isaiah ix. 6, 7. Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, Luke ii. 10.

O Lord, thou being also my mighty Saviour, counsellor, mighty God and all, what can I want? why am I discouraged? why should it be impossible to get the victory in all things? there is none too deeply corrupted, none too weak, and no enemy too strong for thee. Thou art too great a match for them all. Yea, Amen. Hallelujah.

The virgin's promis'd Son is born;
Behold th' expected Child appear:
What shall his name or titles be?
The wonderful, the counsellor.

This Infant is the mighty God,
Come to be suckled and ador'd;
Th' eternal Father, prince of peace,
The Son of DAVID and his Lord.

The government of earth and seas
Upon his shoulders shall be laid;
His wide dominions shall increase,
And honours to his name be paid.
Jesus the holy Child shall sit
High on his Father DAVID's throne;
Shall crush his foes beneath his feet,
And reign to ages yet unknown.

9 May.

(129)

TEACH me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path because of mine enemies, Psal. xxvii. 2. Teach me thy way, O Lord, I will walk in thy truth: Unite my heart to fear thy name, Psal. lxxxvi. 11. Divine answer. Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way. What man is he that fears the Lord? Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose, Psal. xxv. 8, 12.

O Lord, be pleased to fulfil this gracious promise in me also. Thou knowest that I have nothing so much at heart as to do thy will, and yet I am very often lost in darkenss. I trust thou wilt do it. Here it is written; it is thy own word; I depend upon it: Thou hast many times accomplished the same already; and art willing and able to do it evermore, for thy own name's sake, and for my enemies sake. Thou being the God of my covenant, I keep close to thy words, which can never pass away, but are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

I lift my soul to God,
My trust is in his name;
Let not my foes that seek my blood
Still triumph in my shame.

Sin and the pow'rs of hell
Persuade me to despair;
Lord, let me know thy cov'nant well,
That I may 'scape the snare.

The Lord is just and kind,
The meek shall learn his ways;
And ev'ry humble sinner find
The methods of his grace.

For his own goodness-sake
He saves my soul from shame;
He pardons (tho' my guilt be great)
I Thro' my Redeemer's name.

10 May.

(130)

TURN again our captivity, O Lord, Ps. cxxvi. 4. Divine answer. *The Lord has anointed me to preach good things unto the meek, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, Isa. lxi. 1. For thus saith the Lord, &c. I will give thee for a covenant to the people, &c. that thou mayst say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves, they shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places, they shall not hunger nor thirst, Isa. xlix. 8, 9, 10. See also chap xxxv. 10.*

O Lord, I am hungry after the righteousness and freedom, not only of faith, but of life and holiness also; not to please myself in the latter, but that the evidence of the former may be so much clearer by it to me, and I may be able to rejoice and take the comfort of thy righteousness alone without deceiving my soul. Grant therefore that I may be truly filled, and may be strong, easy and free, as not to be kept any longer in any of the most subtle bonds, either of the law, unbelief, and a bad conscience, or of a carnal and worldly mind. .

Bury'd in shadows of the night,
We lie till Christ restores the light;
Wisdom descends to heal the blind,
And chase the darkness of the mind.
Jesus beholds where satan reigns,
Binding his slaves in heavy chains;

He sets the pris'ners free, and breaks
The iron bondage from our necks.
Poor helpless worms in thee possess
Grace, wisdom, pow'r, and righteousness;
Thou art our mighty all, and we
Give our whole selves, O Lord, to thee.

11 May.

(131)

HOW long wilt thou hide thy face from me, O Lord? Psal. xiii. 2. Divine answer. For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, for this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn, that I would not be wrath with thee, nor rebuke thee, Isaiah liv. 7—9.

When the Lord is pleased to quicken us in our prayers with a lively impression of one or more promises, we are apt to think that the hour of his help was come. But afterwards it may be, he not only hides himself for a great while again; but things take even such a strange and contrary course, as if all had been nothing, or (as Luther says,) ‘as if nothing’ was more uncertain than the word of God, nay even God himself. They who deny such temptations, are strangers both to themselves and to the devices of satan. But Christians must then be prudently upon their guard, thinking that God is going to do some glorious things for them: for if they are first more convinced of their utter unworthiness, if they act faith and patience, and are more earnest in prayers, they are fit to receive so much more grace afterwards.

Dear Lord! behold our sore distress;
Our sins attempt to reign;
Stretch out thine arm of conqu’ring grace,
And let thy foes be slain.
If thou despise a mortal groan,
Yet hear a Saviour’s blood;

An advocate so near the throne
Pleads and prevails with God.
How boundless is our Father’s grace,
In height, and depth, and length!
He made his Son our righteousness,
His spirit is our strength.

I 2

12 May.

(132)

HOW long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? Ps. xiii. 2. Divine answer.

Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me, Isa. xlix. 15, 16. I will not leave you comfortless, John xiv. 18.

Were all our sins and afflictions so soon to be prayed away with a few words, whence these sad and repeated complaints of David? why should God advise us to wait for him and persevere in hope? and how could faith and patience be exercised? in our closets we may be lifted up with high speculations; seem to be strong, and able to leap over all the walls; but in great distress we see how dejected and as it were despondent our hearts are, Psal. xxx. 7, 8. But the Lord preserves us.

Why do we thus indulge our fears,
Suspicious and complaints?
Is he a God, and shall his grace
Grow weary of his saints?

Can a kind woman e'er forget
The Infant of her womb,
And 'mongst a thousand tender thoughts
Her suckling have no room?

Yet, says the Lord, should nature change,
And mothers monsters prove,
Zion still dwells upon the heart
Of everlasting love.

Deep on the palms of both my hands
I have engrav'd her name;
My hands shall raise her ruin'd walls,
And build her broken frame.

13 May.

(133)

SHew me thy Ways, O Lord, and teach me thy paths, Ps. xxv. 4. Shew me now thy way that I may know thee, Exod. xxxiii. 13. Divine answer. I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way that thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye, Ps. xxxii. 8. My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest, Exod. xxxiii. 14.

O Lord, suffer me not to deviate one inch from thy way, much less to fall away from thee, the true vine and fortress of my soul, by the plausible insinuations of my own brain and imagination. May I never run, before thou hast called me, to the hurt of my soul; but constantly and confidently abide in thee, always drawing first the necessary light and strength from thee by never-ceasing supplications. Grant that my eye being fixed continually upon thee, I may be guided into all truth, my doings be attended with thy blessings, and my whole life be a constant progress towards heaven. Christ's answer.

' I will keep thee as the apple of mine eye, that no evil shall come near thee. As a careful mother watches over her child, so have I undertaken to teach thee my path, and guide thee with mine own eyes. Whatever faintings and failings may befall thee, yet will I be ever faithful, raising thee up again, and pushing thee on evermore in my ways. Nay, as a good shepherd, I'll carry thee in my own arms, whenever thy encreasing weakness shall require.'

My honour is engag'd to save
The meanest of my sheep;

I 3

All that my heav'nly Father gave,
My hands securely keep.

14 May.

(134)

By these, (books,) my son, be admonished, Ec. xii. 12. But, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby, 1 Pet. ii. 2

New-born babes must not self-conceitedly be desirous of high things and strong meat. Such have more need experimentally to understand the first oracles of Christ, and taste evermore the milk and saving power of the gospel. This would best make them grow in grace and wean them from the world; since a sucking child esteems nothing else in comparison of its mother's breast; and those that delight more in lofty vain imaginations and a strange sort of hymns, than the bible, do not follow the right spirit, and at last must come to their catechism again. For the more a christian is approaching to his end, and desires to be duly prepared for heaven, the more he walks in deep humility and godly simplicity, placing himself on the lowest bench of weak and little children. And thus they are the fittest vessels of grace; they will certainly be enlightened, and have the mystery of Christ revealed in their heart. *Mat. xi. 25.*

There was an hour when Christ rejoic'd,
And spoke his joy in words of praise;
Father, I thank thee, mighty God,
Lord of the earth, and heaven, and seas.
I thank thy sov'reign pow'r and love
That crowns my doctrine with success;
And makes the babes in knowledge learn
The heights, breadth, and length of grace.

But all this glory lies conceal'd
From men of prudence and of wit;
The prince of darkness blinds their eyes;
And their own pride resists the light.
Father, 'tis thus, because thy will
Chose and ordain'd it should be so;
'Tis thy delight t'abuse the proud,
And lay the haughty scorner low.

15 May.

(135)

TAKE heed to yourselves, shunning bad companies and occasions, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and the cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. If the heart must not be so much as overcharged, what will become of those on that day that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink? Watch ye therefore and pray always. Luke xxi. 34, 36. Be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer, 1 Pet. iv. 8.

Sober and watchful we must be even against the love of the world: since the heart, being filled with any thing that is vain, is unable to pray right and enjoy peace: peace being disturbed even by reserving, much more by striving after something for the flesh. But cleaving to Christ alone, ever seeking to relish him and the fulness of his grace, is the best means to secure ourselves from worldliness, uneasiness and sloth of spirit.

Vain man on foolish pleasures bent
Prepares for his own punishment,
What pains, what lothsome maladies
From luxury and lust arise.
The drunkard feels his vitals waste.
Yet drowns his health to please his taste;

Till his active pow'r's are lost,
And fainting life draws near the dust,
The glutton greaves and lothes to eat,
His soul abhors delicious meat:
Nature with heavy loads oppress'd
Would yield to death to be releas'd.

16 May.

(136)

THY word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee. Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy law. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. Therefore, remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. I shall run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart, Ps. cxix. 11, 38. and ver. 6, 49, 32.

Thus gospel comfort powerfully stirreth up to walk according to the law, and the law urges evermore to lay hold on and make right use of the gospel, as not to abuse it to security ; which are both very needful. For whosoever makes void and neglects the law, cannot but make a wrong application of the gospel, and is in danger of either being hurl'd into libertinism, following the bent of his own imagination, or to his great punishment falls under a heavy yoke of mere human inventions. May the Lord lead and keep us in the right way.

Laden with guilt, and full of fears,
I fly to thee, my Lord ;
And not a glimpse of hope appears,
But in thy written word.
This is the judge that ends the strife,
Where wit and reason fail ;

My guide to everlasting life,
Thro' all this gloomy vale.
Oh! may thy counsels, mighty God,
My roving feet command ;
Nor I forsake thy happy road,
That leads to thy right hand.

17 May.

(137)

Through the law I am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me, Gal. ii. 19.

Christ being our head, in whom all fulness dwells, he will certainly fill all his members with life and strength, according to his promise, John xiv. 19. 'I live, and ye shall live also;' and Chap. xvii. 3. 'This is eternal life,' &c. To know Christ, and God in Christ as love, is true light and life; he that has this, has enough. O the excellency of the knowledge of Christ! O Lord, teach me to know thee as the Bridegroom of my soul, that the law may not rush into my conscience, now thy bride-chamber, and condemn me any more. I am devoted to none but thee, Rom. vii. 4. Grant therefore that my whole heart and life, all my words and actions, may be governed only by a living faith on thee, that thou hast loved and given thyself for me.

Come, dearest Lord, descend and dwell

By faith and love in ev'ry breast;

Then shall we know and taste and feel

The joys that cannot be express'd.

Come fill our hearts with inward strength,

Make our enlarged souls possess;

And learn the height and breadth and length
Of thine unmeasurable grace.

Now to the God whose pow'r can do
More than our thoughts or wishes know,
Be everlasting honours done
By all the church thro' Christ his son.

18 May.

(138)

I *A M poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me, Psal. cix. 22. Divine answer. I know thy poverty, but thou art rich, Rev. ii. 9 For blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven, Matth. v. 3. The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live for ever, Psal. xxii. 27. The Lord healeth the broken in heart, the Lord lifts up the meek, Psal. cxlviii. 3, 6. A bruised reed shall be not break, and smoking flax shall be not quench, till he send forth judgement unto victory, Matth. xii. 20.*

Such are the tender mercies of Christ towards the weakest of his people that he supplies them from time to time with all proportionable strength, till at last they are able to gain the complete victory. As soon therefore as we are sensible of our poverty, or miserable condition, and are truly desirous of grace and strength to overcome sin, we have actually some grace and spiritual life, and are delivered a'ready from the jaws of hell: for there is no such feeling in dead souls, and in hell there is only a desire to be delivered from the punishment, but not from sin itself.

Bless'd are the humble souls that see
Their emptiness and poverty;
Treasures of grace to them are giv'n,
And crowns of joy laid up in heav'n.

Bless'd are the men of broken heart,
Who mourn for sin with inward smart;
The blood of Christ divinely flows,
A healing balm for all their woes.

19 May.

(139)

I *Am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life, John viii. 12. Therefore, walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you, for he that walks in darkness, knows not whither he goes, Chap. xii. 35.*

He that is faithful, keeping ever close to Christ and his light, strictly watching and obeying the motions of his spirit, will be evermore tender in conscience, and receive so much more light ; consequently he will be from time to time more deeply rooted in repentance, faith and assurance, so as either to be preserved from many combats and disorders, or at least be carried sooner through the same. He may meet with dark valleys, (nature being, as it were, a great dark abyss, and grace sometimes as a small spawn) yet by degrees it will blaze, and at last break through and enlighten all our darkness.

Is he a star ? he breaks the night,
Piercing the shades with dawning light ;
I know his glories from afar,
I know the bright, the morning-star.

Is he a sun ? his beams are grace,
His course is joy and righteousness ;
Nations rejoice when he appears
To chase their clouds and dry their tears.

Nor earth, nor seas, nor sun nor stars,
Nor heav'n his full resemblance bears ;
His beauties we can never trace,
Till we behold him face to face.

O let me climb those higher skies,
Where storms and darkness never rise !
There he displays his pow'rs abroad,
And shines and reigns th' incarnate God.

20 May.

(140)

I Am the Lord thy God which teaches thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way which thou shouldst go. O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments ! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea, Isa. xlviii. 17, 18. Behold I stand at the door and knock : if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and be with me, Rev. iii. 20.

How often, and how variously does the Lord knock at the door of our hearts ? how clearly are his commandments held forth to us ? but how seldom are we inclined to give him the hearing ? Very often we are so distracted, that we can hardly observe his voice from the noise of worldly things in our senses, and are not at home, when he is pleased to take up his abode with us. Well, even now he is a knocking by this. O let us open the door for him directly, since he desires nothing from us that might be grievous, but intends to make our hearts a glorious residence and banqueting-room of his love, to fill it with heavenly goods, and to prepare and give every thing himself.

I'll bring him to my mother's home,
Nor does my Lord refuse to come
To Zion's sacred chambers, where
My soul first drew the vital air.
He gives me there his bleeding heart,
Pierc'd for my sake with deadly smart ;

I give my soul to him, and there
Our loves their mutual tokens share.

I charge you all, ye earthly toys,
Approach not to disturb my joys ;
Nor sin, nor hell, come near my heart ;
Nor cause my Saviour to depart.

21 May.

(141)

I Am the true vine, and my Father the husbandman; every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he takes away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Abide in me, and I in you: he that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit, Jn. xv. 1, 5.

O Lord, I trust that this word will have its accomplishment in me also; tho' as yet I have great reason to be humbled on account of my barrenness. Grant therefore that I may always abide in thee faithfully and quietly; since there is every thing in thy power, and nothing can be got and done by our own strength; but as it is thy will, and it tends both to the glory of thy Father and thine own, I depend upon being replenished in due season with fruits of righteousness. O suffer nothing in me which is to the dishonour of thy name, and which may be offensive to me and to others. But whatever thou thinkest as yet fit for me to suffer, let it work for my real good.

How can I sufficiently adore the patience of the Lord my gracious husbandman, who still bears with me the weakest of all his branches. He has not cut me off yet, but still dresses me to bring forth more fruit, tho' as yet I hardly yielded him one good, but a multitude of wild grapes. Why then should thou grumble, O my heart, at the application of his pruning knife? It is really for thy good. He is angry only with the degenerate unfruitful branches. The more these are purged, the more fruit thou shalt bring forth.

Is Christ a vine? his heav'nly root
Supplies the boughs with life and fruit:

O let a lasting union join
My soul to him the living vine!

22 May.

(142)

I Am glorified in them, I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one,
John xvii. 10, 26, 23.

O glorious promise! how could he love us more? What blessed and intimate union is this? O for such a faith that could always truly believe it! Christ is the vine, believers are the branches; he the bridegroom, we the bride; he the head, we the members of his body, of his very flesh and very bones, and consequently one body with him. And whoever hated his own flesh? so in loving and cherishing us, he loves himself, *Eph. v. 28, 29.* Whenever he shall cease to love himself, then, and no sooner, shall he cease to love and cherish us also. It is his own delight to do us good, more than the mother that suck'es her child.

Lord, what a heav'n of saving grace
Shines thro' the beauties of thy face,
And lights our passion to a flame!
Lord how we love thy charming name!
When I can say, my God is mine,
When I can feel thy glories shine;

I tread the world beneath my feet,
And all that earth calls good or great.
Send comforts down from thy right hand,
While we pass thro' this barren land:
And in thy temple let us see
A glimpse of love, a glimpse of thee.

23 May.

(143)

I Am weary with groaning, Pſ. vi. 6. Divine answer. He gives power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaſes ſtrength, Iſa. xl. 29. I have ſatiated the weary ſoul, and I have replenished every ſorrowful ſoul, Jerem. xxxi. 25. Therefore, Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden and I will give you reſt, Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye ſhall find reſt to your ſouls, for my yoke is eaſy, and my burden is light, Mat. xi. 28, 30.

Here Chriſt is commending his meekneſs, not ſo much as a pattern to be imitated, and does not properly promiſe his reſt and comforts for our labour and humility, but to the coming and believing in him; to encourage the heavy laden ſouls not to be frightened, but draw near to him with confidence and boldneſs, he ſays, I am not ſo rough and proud as phariſees and other men generally are towards offenders, but meek, lowly in heart, full of compaſſion and willing to receive, to forgive and comfort them. Come therefore to him, O ſinner, with all thy loads of ſin and miſery, he will in no wiſe caſt thee out, but receive thee gladly.

Come hither, all ye weary ſouls,

Ye heavy-laden ſinners come;

I'll give you reſt from all your toils,

And raiſe you to my heav'nly home.

Bleſs'd is the man whoſe ſhoulders take

My yoke, and bear it with delight;

My yoke is eaſy to his neck,

My grace ſhall make the burden light.

Jeſus, we come at thy command,

With faith and hope and humble zeal,

Reſign our ſpirits to thy hand,

To mould and guide us at thy will.

24 May.

(144)

I Have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek thy servant, Ps. cxix. 176. God's answer. Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out, I will seek thee which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick. Ezek. xxxiv. 11, 16. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, &c. Isa. xl. 11.

He that is wise in his own conceit, as many of our philosophers, does not pray like David in this place, therefore he continues, with all his proud wisdom, in his natural errors and foolishness. But as thou hast given me, O thou good shepherd, to know and understand my lost and helpless condition; and I cannot find or advise my self in any thing, like a sheep which is gone astray; I beseech thee to seek, heal, tread, feed, carry and strengthen me also, as I stand in need of and seems good to thee, that I may be able to say with David, 'The Lord is my shepherd, 'I shall not want.'

My shepherd will supply my need,
Jehovah is his name;
In pasture fresh he makes me feed
Beside the living stream.

He brings my wand'ring spirit back,
When I forsake his ways;

And leads me for his mercies sake,
In paths of truth and grace.

The sure provisions of my God
Attend me all my days;

O may thy house be mine abode,
And all my work be praise!

25 May.

(145)

I Am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant, Gen. xxxii. 10. Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house that thou hast brought me hither? 2 Sam. vii. 18.

A soul truly humbled thro' afflictions highly esteems the least favour, and judges itself utterly unworthy of it, looking upon every thing as a free gift only for Jesus Christ's sake. Now, O my dear Father! it is true, in myself I deserve none, no, not the least of thy mercies; but as thou hast, thought me more worthy and given me thine own Son, who hath purchased all again, and paid a great price for them; yet I firmly believe, that goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life.

Now to the pow'r of God supreme
Be everlasting honours giv'n;
He saves from hell, (we bless his name)
He calls our wand'ring feet to heav'n.

Not for our duties or deserts,
But of his own abounding grace,
He works salvation in our hearts,
And forms a people for his praise

'Twas his own purpose that begun
To rescue rebels doom'd to die:
He gave us grace in Christ his Son,
Before he spread the starry sky.
Jesus the Lord appears at last,
And makes his Father's counsels known
Declares the great transactions past,
And brings immortal blessings down.

26 May.

(146)

I Beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, Rom. xii. 1, 2.

This, in conjunction with the word of God and serious prayers, is the best means to know the will of God. The neglecting of it and using other means, is tempting God, and exposing ourselves to the temptations and siftings of the wicked one. We may think ourselves to be divinely convinced by faith of the will of God, tho' we follow our own imaginations, and spoil the best of our actions. Self-will generally takes quick resolutions, and has a great deal of assurance: whereas God very often leads his people blindly, and takes methods quite different from ours. 'Who therefore believes shall not make haste,' Isa. xxviii. 16. But be very careful that he do not mistake self-will and plausible representations for divine convictions and assurance of faith; always strictly examining himself first; whether his body, soul, will and affections are entirely offered up to the good-will and pleasure of God! for the only true service which God delights in, is the sacrificing our whole selves to him at all times, and not only at church, but in all other places, that we do not conform to the world, but be daily transformed by the renewing of our minds.

Tho' lifted eyes salute the skies,
And bended knees the ground,
Yet God abhors the sacrifice,
Wheremot the truth is found.

Lord, search my thoughts and try my ways,
And make my soul sincere:
Then shall I stand before thy face,
And find acceptance there.

27 May.

(147)

I Will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels, Isa. lxi. 10.

In vain dost thou dress up and adorn thyself, O my sou', before thou approachest Christ. To him thou must come, filthy, naked and miserable as thou art; he will clothe and adorn thee himself, and in this ornament alone thou shalt rejoice. For the very best of our robes and performances are not without spots, but still want to be washed in the blood of Christ and covered with this ornament, Rev. vii. 14. This and this alone is the way to enjoy and maintain a true peace. This will enable us to rejoice that our names are written in heaven.

Awake my heart, arise my tongue;
Prepare a tuneful voice;
In God, the life of all my joys,
Aloud will I rejoice.

'Tis he adorn'd my naked soul,
And made salvation mine;
Upon a poor polluted worm
He makes his graces shine,

K 2

The spirit wrought my faith and love,
And hope, and ev'ry grace;
But Jesus spent his life to work
The robe of righteousness.

Strangely, my soul, art thou array'd
By the great sacred three!
In sweetest harmony of praise
Let all the pow'rs agree.

28 May.

(148)

I Have sinned against the Lord. Divine answer. *The Lord also has put away thy sin, thou shalt not die,* 2 Sam. xii. 13. *For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged,* 1 Cor. xi. 31.

He that with unfeigned repentance accuses and judges himself, accounting his own righteousness and best doings as filthy rags, will soon receive grace, pardon and remission of all his sins at once, tho' chastisement may follow; for grace is not divided as gifts are. God, through Christ, receives the whole person of a penitent sinner into his favour, forgiving both original and actual sins in one instant; so that either none or all are forgiven: not one, even the least, is forgiven, only on account of our repentance (as some vainly imagine) without the blood of Christ; but by this all, even the most hainous, are taken away; for the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sins, 1 John i. 7.

Shew pity, Lord, O Lord forgive;
Let a repenting rebel live:
Are not thy mercies large and free?
May not a sinner trust in thee?
My lips with shame my sins confess
Against thy law, against thy grace:
Lord, should thy judgment grow severe,
I am condemn'd but thou art clear.

Should sudden vengeance seize my breath,
I must pronounce thee just in death;
And if my soul were sent to hell,
Thy righteous law approves it well.
My crimes are great, but not surpass
The power and glory of thy grace;
Great God, thy nature has no bound,
So let thy pardoning love be found.

29 May.

(149)

I Have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love, Rev. ii. 4.

This comforts me, O my dear Father ! that thou hast shewn me thy mercy, and lovest me in Christ ; but this grieves me also, that my love is still so weak towards thee. O supply these my great defects, and whatever thou suffereſt to remain lay it not to my charge, and let it not diſturb my filial confidence, rather let it ſerve, that I truſt ſo much more upon Chriſt alone, and that I may be ſtirred up to more earneſt prayers ; then there is no doubt but my great wants ſhall in due time be all fill'd up with a real conſtant love.

Why is my heart ſo far from thee,
My God, my chief delight ?
Why are my thoughts no more by day
With thee, no more by night ?
Why ſhould my fooliſh paſſions rove ?
Where can ſuch ſweetneſs be,
As I have taſted in thy love,
As I have found in thee ?

Trifles of nature or of art,
With fair deceitful charms
Intrude into my thoughtleſs heart,
And thruſt me from thy arms.
Wretch that I am, to wander thus
In chace of falſe delight !
Let me be faſten'd to thy croſs,
Rather than loſe thy ſight.

30 May.

(150)

I Wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, Psal. cxxx. 5. God's answer. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint, Isa. xiv. 31. For the Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeks him, Lament. iii. 25.

When we have prayed, we must remember to wait also ; for it is not only an express command, but very acceptable to the Lord. The more we wait and are instant in prayer, so much more will he give : Nay, he always hears and grants our petitions directly, and lays them up for his children ; but that we may not abuse them, he gives the enjoyment only when it is most needful. Therefore we may confidently say, such and such gifts I have, since I have prayed for them : They are actually laid up for me, and the use and benefit thereof I shall reap in due season, especially in death and all eternity.

My spirit looks to God alone ;
My rock and refuge is his throne ;
In all my fears, in all my straits,
My soul on his salvation waits.
Trust him, ye saints, in all your ways,
Pour out your hearts before his face ;

When helpers fail and foes invade,
God is our all-sufficient aid.
For sov'reign pow'r reigns not alone,
Grace is a partner of his throne :
Thy grace and justice, mighty Lord,
Shall well divide our last reward.

31 May.

(151)

*I*N the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul,
Psal. xciv. 19. See also 2 Cor. i. 3—5.

A man without afflictions seeks his trust and seeks his comforts chiefly in temporal things; he is full of earthly desires, and the true image of vanity; whereas we can never taste the sweet comforts of the word of God so well as under the burden of the cross. There our spirits sometimes enjoy more rest and joy than if we were without it, for then that word is fulfill'd which Christ says, Matt. xi. 30. 'My yoke is easy and my burden is light.' Thus our hearts are set against the world, reconciled to heavenly things, and easily disunited from many idols, which were impossible to deny and forsake before. Well then may we bear this salutary burden, which will certainly end, and who knows how soon, in eternal glory and rest. And as the Lord will also give patience and strength sufficient for the day, so as to be never tempted above measure, there is abundant reason again to say, that his burden is light indeed.

'Tis good for me to wear the yoke,
For pride is apt to rise and swell;
'Tis good to bear my Father's stroke,
That I might learn his statutes well. K 4

Father I bless thy gentle hand;
How kind is thy chastising rod
That forc'd my conscience to a stand,
And brought my wand'ring soul to God.

1 June.

(152)

I Determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified, 1 Cor. ii. 2. The love of God is most excellent wisdom, Eccles. i. 13. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, &c. Psal. cxi. 10. The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruit, without partiality and without hypocrisy, James iii. 17. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifies. 1 Cor. viii 1.

Christ crucified, and he alone is the power and wisdom of God; him all christians, and especially divines, should make their particular practice to study well. Were our faith builded on human Wisdom, then surely carnal philosophers would be the greatest believers; whereas they are sometimes the worst infidels, or at best the most silly and faithless people in times of distress. And besides, their being puffed up is another evidence that they have not the true wisdom; for the wisdom from above is only with the lowly and babes, who pray for it earnestly, Prov. xi. 2. Matt. xi. 25. What would all knowledge avail us then, without the know'edge of Christ? one spark of pure love yields more power than all the stores of empty human learning. May the Lord Jesus shed his love abroad into my heart, him have I determined only to know; his love at the cross I account for my greatest wisdom and glory.

They that would grow divinely wise,
Must with his love begin;
Our fairest proof of knowledge lies
In hating every sin.

To fear his pow'r, to trust his grace
Is our divinest skill;
And he's the wisest of our race
That best obeys his will.

2 June.

(153)

I Will not let thee go except thou blest me, Gen. xxxii. 12. Forsake me not, O Lord, O my God, Psal. xxxviii. 22. Divine answer Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all place: whither thou goest, for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of, Gen. xxviii. 15. I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight, Exod. xxxiii. 12. I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, Heb. xiii. 5.

God will have me to be faithful, and should not he be so himself; am I to trust in his word, then surely he will not forsake me, but be as good as his word. Heaven and earth must pass away, but his word will not: He is ever faithful, If I don't believe this, I believe no God at all; but if I truly believe him to be faithful, I believe enough. This is what he only desires, and if I really do, my faith will not be moved even in the hottest trials; the word will hold me up, though I receive it even in weakness.

Begin, my tongue, some heav'nly theme,
And speak some boundless thing;
The mighty works or mightier name
Of our eternal King.

Tell of his wondrous faithfulness,
And sound his pow'r abroad,
Sing the sweet promise of his grace,
And the performing God.

Proclaim salvation from the Lord
For wretched dying men;
His hand has writ the sacred word
With an immortal pen.
Engrav'd as in eternal brass
The mighty promise shines;
Nor can the powers of darkness raise
Those everlasting lines.

3 June.

(154)

I Sa; unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment, Matt. xii. 36. See also Eph. iv. 29. v. 4.

Here all corroupt communication, jesting, foolish talking, or whatever is not convenient and good to the use of edifying, is plainly forbidden. But who truly believes the report and the truth of these awful words? surley the world does not believe them at all: this is quite plain, from that very common and shocking practice and custom of judging, lying, swearing, jesting, and talking all manner of filthiness, yea, even religious people very often do not believe and consider them enough. How many heedless, slanderous, idle and unprofitable words, are sometimes spoken by these? be therefore careful, O my reader, to weigh every word, and to make light of none, for each will increase thine account. Whenever ye are going to speak, let the question be first, Is it needful to speak? does it tend to the glory of God? will it profit me, or others? O Lord grant, that never an idle word may drop from my lips. Whenever I am to converse with others, give me grace first to converse with thee by secret prayers. In all companies let thy presence be before mine eyes, always looking upon thee as the chief person in the place, and receiving direction, when and what I am to speak. May thy good spirit always teach me and sanctify all my thoughts and words.

Thus I resolve before the Lord,
Now will I watch my tongue,

Left I let slip one sinful word,
Or do my neighbour wrong.

4 June.

(155)

I Will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin. I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me, Psal. xxxviii. 18. Psal. li. 5. Divine answer. He has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities; for as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him, Psal. ciii. 10—13.

As my sins are ever before me, so the ransom of my Mediator is ever before God and me also. God having dealt already with Christ my surety for my sins, he cannot deal for them with me again: for he cannot take double payment, and punish them twice: not only his mercy, but even his justice requires him to save me, when I lay hold on the merits and the most perfect atonement of his dear Son my Redeemer. Thus all my sins and punishments are taken away for ever, my conscience is perfectly purged, and by faith I am able to answer all the charges of the law, 1 John. i. 9. Heb. ix. 14. Chap. x. 2, 22.

High as the heavens are rais'd
Above the ground we tread,
So far the riches of his grace
Our highest thoughts exceed.

His power subdues our Sins,
And his forgiving love,
Far as the east is from the west,
Doth all our guilt remove.

5 June.

(156)

BY night on my bed, I sought him whom my soul loveth, Cantic, iii. 1.

Many are seeking Christ who have him already, tho' he hides himself; and many imagine they have him, who have him not; for such as have him only in their thoughts and in their mouth, have him not in their heart. O my dear Saviour, let me always remember and firmly believe that thy Father loves me as he loves thee, and that thou lovest me also as thy very spouse and a member of thy body. Happy would that be for me, then I could love thee again; and we should delight in one another reciprocally above all creatures.

Jesus my portion, and my love,
My everlasting all;
I've none but thee in heav'n above,
Or on this earthly ball.
How vain a toy is glitt'ring wealth
If once compar'd to thee?
Or what's my safety, or my health,
Or all my friends to me?

Let others stretch their arms like seas,
And grasp in all the shore,
Grant me the visits of thy face,
And I desire no more.
For whilst upon my restless bed
Amongst the shades I roll,
If my Redeemer shews his head,
'Tis morning with my soul.

6 June

(157)

I Know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness, 1 Chron. xxix. 17. He is a buckler to them that walk uprightly Prov. xi. 8. The Lord looks on the heart, 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

Since God cannot be deceived with a mere outward form, tho' ever so fine ; it is not an infalible proof of a sincere, real conversion, if a man has reformed only the grosser sins of his former life, much less if he only abstains from such things which by nature he is not so much inclined to: but if our hearts are changed, and especially in those things we have the strongest propensity, this is an infallible evidence of a true conversion. For these inward capital enemies, the Lord and all his upright followers attack most, before all the rest. But if thou wouldest give over that which is dearest to thee, thou must know and believe first, *that Christ loves thee*. These thoughts we must prosecute, tho' all other things should be forgotten,

Mistaken souls! that dream of heav'n,
And make their empty boast
Of inward joys and sins forgiv'n,
While they are slaves to lust.
Vain are our fancies, airy flights,
If faith be cold and dead ;
None but a living pow'r unites,
To Christ the living head.

'Tis faith that changes all the heart ;
'Tis faith that works by love ;
That bids all sinful joys depart,
And lifts the thoughts above.
Faith must obey her Father's will,
As well as trust his grace ;
A pard'ning God is jealous still
For his own holiness,

7 June.

(158)

I Will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall that she shall not find her paths ; and she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them, and she shall seek them and not find them ; then shall she say, I will go and return unto my first husband, for then was it better with me than now, Hof. ii. 6, 7.

As it is only with thee, O my dear Saviour, that I can be happy, I would never leave thee any more: and that I may not give thee the slip unawares, even under good pretences, I desire to have my way well hedged up, and be encompassed every where with Thorns. Let me quickly discover and crucify every thing which can in the least disturb me in the enjoyment of thy love, that I may always closely walk with thee alone ; and never step one inch out of thy way, for fear of runing myself into the thorns, and bringing unnecessary sufferings upon me ; tho' I do not mean to avoid the cross of Christ in other respects, but would willingly submit to any sufferings, which are never without good fruit.

Glory be to thee, O my blessed Saviour, that thou hast not given me up yet, and suffered me to run into destruction in my own ways. O be pleased to restrain me evermore, and whenever I am in danger to slide out into the broad way, grant that I may not find any rest till I am brought back again, should it even be by means of the pricking thorns of afflictions.

I know thy judgments, Lord, are right,
Tho' they may seem severe ;
The sharpest sufferings I endure
Flow from thy faithful care.

Before I knew thy chast'ning rod
My feet were apt to stray ;
But now I learn to keep thy word,
Nor wander from thy way.

8 June.

(159)

I Will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the works of my hands shall be glorified, Isa. lx. 15. 20. 21, I will direct their work in truth, and will make an everlasting covenant with them, Chap. lxi. 8. Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God! and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee, Isa. lxii. 3. 5. See also Prov. iv. 9. Eccles. xv. 2.

O my dear Saviour and Bridegroom, how could it be possible for thee to take delight in a sinful worm as I, if it was not intirely for the sake of thine own gracious beauties, garments and ornaments. But since it is thy pleasure to rejoice in thine own works, what can I desire more agreeable to the will than the fulfilling of all these engagements? let me prosper evermore by thy plantings of thy hand, that my works, being done in thee, may glorify thy wondrous grace, and my life abound evermore with fruits meet for eternity.

Kind is the speech of Christ our Lord,
Affection sounds in ev'ry Word;
What mighty wonders love performs,
And puts a comeliness on worms.

Defil'd and lothsome as we are,
He makes us white, and calls us fair;
Adorns us with that heav'nly dress,
His graces and his righteousness.

9 June

(160)

I Will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, and I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me; yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good. I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul, Jer. xxxii. 40, 41. I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me, and I will pardon all their iniquity, Jer. xxxiii. 8. See also Ezek. xxxvi, 25, 26, 27.

O glorious promise! God will plant us, cleanse us, and not leave off to do us good. If we do not experience it the reason is, that either we resist, or do not mind the workings of his grace enough, which certainly is a great loss: for the least spiritual loss is greater than the loss of the whole world. O thou God of my covenant, as it is thy heart's desire to work and give all that's good without ceasing, so let me also be careful without ceasing, to open wide the mouth of faith by prayers, and receive the blessed gifts of thy goodness. And whereas my heart is even now prepared for thee, be pleased to fill it up with thy grace.

Dear God, the treasures of thy love
Are everlasting mines;
Deep as our helpless miseries are,
And boundless as our sins.

The happy gates of gospel grace
Stand open night and day:
Lord, we are come to seek supplies,
And drive our wants away.

10 June.

((161))

MY mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him, Psal. lxxxix. 29.

Generally there is much spoken of grace, remission of sins, and the assurance thereof; but seldom enough of baptism, which gives both; for tho' I shou'd break my baptismal vow, yet the covenant and grace of God does not fall away. As soon as I repent of my fall, ask pardon thro' Christ and return to my duty, it is the same again as if I had never fallen; I have recovered the eternal grace and forgiveness of all sins, which was given me in baptism.

The promise of my Father's love.

Shall stand for ever good;

He said, and gave his Son to death,

And seal'd the grace with blood.

To this dear cov'nant of thy word

I set my worthless name;

I seal th' engagement of my Lord,

And make my humble claim.

The light, and strength, and pard'ning

And glory shall be mine; [grace,

My life and soul, my heart and flesh,

And all my pow'rs are thine.

I call that legacy my own,

Which Jesus did bequeath;

'Twas purchas'd with a dying groan,

And ratify'd in death.

Sweet is the mem'ry of his name,

Who blest'd us in his will,

And to his testament of love,

Made his own life the seal.

11 June.

(162)

I Will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lilly, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, Hosea xiv. 6, 7. Let my beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits, Cant. iv. 16. But the fruit of the spirit is love, &c. Gal. v. 22.

Whatever vile lusts and prophane thoughts are started up against my own will, by the remainder of the evil root, the blessed God will not lay them to my charge; but since they humble me deep, they must also work for my good, tho' they seem sometimes to destroy faith, love and all other good fruit, that I am like a barren tree. The Lord has promised that I shall be green, blossom, and bring forth fruit. This word must also be fulfilled in me, tho' it should go ever so slow, and even by contrary ways. His love will yet be shed abroad in my heart, and constrain powerfully.

We are a garden wall'd around,
Chosen and made peculiar ground;
A little spot, inclos'd by grace,
Cut of the world's wide wilderness.

Awake, O heav'nly wind, and come,
Blow on this garden of perfume;

Spirit divine, descend and breathe
A gracious gale on plants beneath.

Make our best spices flow abroad,
To entertain our Saviour God:
And faith, and love, and joy appear,
And ev'ry grace be active here.

12 June.

(163)

I Will perform my good word towards you ; for I know the Thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then you shall pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you, and ye shall seek me and find me : I will turn away your captivity, Jer. xxix. 10, 11, 13. For the word of the Lord is right ; for he spoke and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast, Psal. xxxiii. 4, 9.

Were it so light a matter to rely on the faithfulness of God in times of distress, what need to give us so many and various promises ? If our faith be right, we must also endure and wait his time with patience, which certainly is not an easy task ; since the promise of the Lord not only tarries very often, but sometimes even the counter part will happen, that Providence goes quite contrary to the word, and seems as if it could not be true at all. And then we must remember that these are the very ways and methods of God, who have ever been in the deep, and acted, *per contraria*, contrary to our expectation. This the corruption of our nature requires, and the wisdom of God ever chooses first to help us inwardly, and prepare us to a right use of his outward helps and favours ; and thus we receive always a double blessing at once from his hands.

Who shall pretend to teach him skill,
Or guide the counsels of his will ?
His wisdom like a sea divine,
Flows deep and high beyond our line. L. 2

Each of his words demands my faith,
My soul can rest on all he saith ;
His truth inviolably keeps
The largest promise of his lips.

13 June.

(164)

BEhold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness and speak comfortably unto her, Hos. ii. 14. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages, Cant vii. 11.

O Lord, the world is nothing to me but a wilderness, a place of tribulation, where, being daily tossed to and fro, I enjoy no rest; but whenever I lifted up my heart and look'd for peace in thee by prayer, thou hast always spoke comfortable things to me, and even carried me safe thro' all outward distresses. Grant that by this I may be strengthen'd for the time to come, when I am at a loss again, what course to take. Let me always firmly believe thee to be a present help in all things, who art willing and able to carry me furthermore thro' ever so many and great troubles and oppositions, till I shall be safely arrived at the ports of heaven.

Lord, what a wretched land is this,
That yields us no supply,
No chearing fruits, no wholsom trees,
Nor streams of living joy.
But pricking thorns thro' all the ground,
And mortal poisons grow,
And all the rivers that are found,
With dang'rous waters flow.

Yet the dear path to thine abode
Lies thro' this horrid land:
Lord! we would keep the heaven'ly road,
And run at thy command.
Our souls shall tread the desert thro'
With undiverted feet;
And faith and flaming zeal subdue
The terrors that we meet.

14 June

(165)

*FOR the power of the Lord is great, and he is honoured of the lowly, Sirach
iii. 20. For those that walk in pride, he is able to abase, Dan. iv. 37.
The kings of the earth bring their glory and honour into the city of God, Rev.
xxi. 24.*

Some are of such an insatiable pride, that they think themselves not proud enough, but spend sometimes much money upon great titles and offices, only to shew themselves with more pride. For every one, as Mr. John Arndt observes, ' by nature desires to be something great, but none ' to be lowly with Christ and follow him; for he has many servants, but very few followers.' Grant, O Lord, that I may never defile myself with pride, but give myself up to thee intirely with all my inward and outward prerogatives, to seek only thine, not mine own honour, in all things. What greater pride can there be, than to be jealous of the honours of his station and birth? have we not much more reason to be humbled and ashamed on account of our birth and progenitors? have not all our ancestors, from the very first to the last, been sinners? Is not all human blood alike corrupted? what can it then be else but a vain sort of pride, to seek any difference and glory in the blood? there is no difference before God, except we are born again, and we act in every rank and station like true christians, and do all things in unfeigned humility to the glory of God. This is the only birth and prerogative in which we can please God and adorn our outward station.

All honours perish in the dust,
And pomp and beauty, birth and blood;

The glorious day exalts the just
To full dominion o'er the proud.

15 June.

(166)

*J*esus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, Heb. xiii. 8. *Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, that, as it is written, he that glories, let him glory in the Lord, 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. He has finished the transgression, he has made reconciliation for iniquity, he has brought in everlasting righteousness, Dan. ix. 24. In him have we righteousness and strength, Isa. xlv. 24.*

In ourselves we find nothing but misery ; in Christ all that is good, nay he is himself our all : he works and gives what is necessary to salvation, therefore we cannot, and need not bring any thing to him of our own ; but since he is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and all, we may, and must rely only on his name, and draw every thing from him by continual prayers of faith. And he being our all, the law, sin, satan, and even our own judgments have lost their power and right of condemnation over us.

Jehovah speaks, let Israel hear,
Let all the earth rejoice and fear,
While God's eternal Son proclaims
His sov'reign honours and his names.
I am the last ; and I the first,
The Saviour God, and God the just ;

There's none beside pretends to shew
Such justice and salvation too.
In me alone shall men confess
Lies all their strength and righteousness ;
But such as dare despise my name,
I'll clothe them with eternal shame.

16 June.

(167)

B Elowed, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another, John iv.

11. I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, Matt. v. 44.

Hypocrites may counterfeit the children of God in many things, but they cannot love their enemies from their hearts; and yet by this we must try and know ourselves whether we are really children of God or not. The World very easily but falsely supposes this; but sincere christians find it often very hard to believe it without a divine sense and assurance of it; it costs them many a sore conflict: for if satan disputed the Sonship of Christ, much less will he spare any of us. But since a true love to the children of God and to our enemies is a sure evidence of our state of grace, we have our titles clear to it, tho' we should walk in darkness, and be destitute of all pleasant sensations.

Now by the bowels of my God,
His sharp distress, his sore complaints,
By his last groans, his dying blood,
I charge my soul to love the saints.
Clamour, and wrath, and war, be gone,
Envy and spite for ever cease; L 4

Let bitter words no more be known
Amongst the saints, the sons of peace,
Tender and kind be all our thoughts,
Through all our lives let mercy run:
So God forgives our numerous faults,
For the dear sake of Christ his son.

17 June:

(168)

YO U are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel, Hebr. xii 22—24. Thus is fulfilled the promise, Isa. xxxv. 10. The ransomed of the Lord shall return, &c. See also Eph. ii. 5, 6. Phil. iii. 20.

The members of the church militant and triumphant are one body, of which Christ is the head; consequently the former are as blessed here below, and if they continue in Christ, as safe as the other above. By faith we are just as near and dear to Christ, as just and happy, as we can desire; it is the same even now as when we shall come to be more sanctified, nay if we were in heaven already. The weak children enjoy the very same love and pardon as the strong ones, and are looked upon like the perfect souls in heaven. May the Lord but clear our hearts from unbelief and worldly desires to receive this inestimable treasure, and give us more assurance of it by a lively faith.

The saints on earth and all the dead,
But one communion make;
All join in Christ their living head,
And of his grace partake.

In such society as this
My weary soul would rest:
The man that dwells where Jesus is,
Must be for ever bless'd.

18 June.

(169)

YE shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land; but if you will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come to pass that those which you let remain of them, shall be pricks in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell, Numb. xxxiv. 52, 55. See this fulfill'd, Judges i. 27, Chap. ii. 14. Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Bethshean, &c. and the Canaanites would dwell in that land; so that they, the Israelites, could not any longer stand before their enemies.

The very same is to be observed in the holy and spiritual battles of the Lord. He that fights only against outward sins is but very little, if at all, acquainted with the dangerous enemies in his heart, or the deep corruption of original sin, and so the tempter may easily gain an advantage over him. Experienc'd christians guard more against the inward assaults of wickedness; they are at peace with no sin, but keep up a constant war with all their most subtle and darling lusts, even when they appear under spiritual disguise. O Lord, give me grace never to spare myself or any of my sinful lusts and passions, but to destroy them without delay as soon as they begin to move or stir, that I may not be destroyed by any.

Forgive my guilt, O Prince of peace,
I'll wound my soul no more:
Hence from my heart, ye sins, be gone,
For Jesus I adore.

Furnish me, Lord, with heav'nly arms
From grace's magazine,
And I'll proclaim eternal war
With ev'ry darling sin.

19 June.

(170)

June 19

IN the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, and the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, Gen. i. 1, 2. We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus; Note, unto good works, not to indifferent things, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them, Eph. ii. 10.

Therefore before we can do truly good works, we must first be created and born anew. How is it possible for a man to make any progress in renovation, if a real change has not been wrought in his heart? we must needs be first stripped of our own righteousness and strength, and made sensible of our spiritual nakedness, poverty and nothingness by true repentance, then seek remission of sins and be justified, before we can be sanctified. Christ being the vine, we must first be planted in him, and draw nourishment and strength from him by faith. When it is fulfilled, they shall feed and lie down on his pasture, and none shall make them afraid, Zeph. iii. 13. Then we shall be able to bring forth good Fruits, and obtain victories. For it is God himself that thus makes us perfect in every good work, and prepares a table before us in the presence of our enemies.

Mighty Redeemer, set me free

From my old state of sin;

Oh, make my soul alive to thee,

Create new pow'rs within.

Renew mine eyes and form mine ears,

And mould my heart afresh;

Give me new passions, joys and fears,

And turn the stone to flesh.

20 June.

(171)

I *N the Lord have I righteousness and strength*, Isa. xlv. 24. 2 Cor. ii. 14
Chap. v. 19.

Justification through faith in Christ, at first is a very dark doctrine, hard to be understood, but afterwards we find, by experience, that it would be impossible to be saved in another way, and that nothing can be surer than this, tho' all mankind should turn away from it. It will soon plainly appear, that all things, even our best performances, are unclean in the sight of God, and could not be agreeable to him in the least, without the covering of Christ's righteousness. Thus we are brought to submit entirely to Christ, and at last to look upon ourselves wholly justified through him, which alone produces rest, strength, and a gentle spirit, the true image of Christ.

In vain do we expect to effect this by the persuasions of our natural reason, or the strong resolutions of a generous mind. It is only to keep us off from earnestly wrestling in prayer, if by our own strength sometimes we are able to master our affections. But this is only a building of our own. The form of godliness we have without its power: we deceive our own souls. Nothing can be pleasing in the sight of God, and profit us at the last day, but what he works himself. Away therefore with all these doings of our own. Let us acknowledge the weakness and nothingness of our strength, and apply in our poor, blind, naked, lost and miserable condition to the righteousness of Christ's blood; then we shall also find power and dominion over sin, Isa. xxxiii. 24.

Sinners shall hear the sound;
Their thankful tongues shall own,

Our righteousness and strength is found
In thee the Lord alone.

21 June.

(172)

IN the day of my trouble I will call upon thee, for thou wilt hear me. Psal. lxxxvi. 8. God's Answer. Then shalt thou call and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, here I am, Isa. lviii 9. The Lord is rich unto all who call upon him, and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (This, to the comfort of the weak, is several times repeated in scripture, Joe ii. 32. Acts ii. 21. Rom. x. 12, 13, 19.) Therefore when the righteous cry, the Lord heareth them, and delivereth them out of all their troubles, Psal. xxxiv. 18. The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him, Psal. cxlv 18. The prayer of a righteous man availeth much, James v, 16.

O glorious promise! how can God deny me any thing now what I pray for? he has pass'd his word for it; his Son has purchased it; the holy spirit works the prayer; the word holds it forth, and the prayer of faith lays hold of it and actually receives it. Prayer is the mouth of faith. If thou wilt have much, open thy mouth wide and it shall be filled. Who then should not be stirred up to pray much! O what foolishness is this, that we have nothing. but can obtain all from God, and yet are so loth to pray much and pray right.

God knows the pains his servants feel,
He hears his children cry;

And their best wishes to fulfil,
His grace is ever nigh.

22 June.

(173)

Joseph said unto his brethren, come near to me, I pray you, &c. I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt; now be not angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before for to preserve your life, Gen. xlv. 4, 5. In like manner does Christ speak to his brethren, O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, &c. Hos. vi. 4. That thou mayst remember and be confounded, and never more open thy mouth because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, Ezech. xvi, 63.

We must never offer to vindicate or extenuate our failings and sins, but rather be ashamed and humbly confess our guilt. Thus the Lord not only pardons our transgressions, but even makes them turn to our advantage, and clears us often from the most intricate difficulties into which we have run ourselves. He averts the offence given by our faults, and orders them to the Good of others, that they must serve to their improvement, or at least do them no harm. O the riches of his grace!

What mortal pow'r from things unclean
Can pure productions bring?
Who can command a vital stream
From an infested spring?

Yet, mighty God, thy wondrous love
Can make our nature clean;
While Christ and grace prevail above
The tempter, death and sin.

23 June.

(174)

TRULY God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a pure heart, Psal. lxxiii. 1. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 1 Pet. ii. 11.

Therefore, says *Luther* on this passage, a constant conflict is required; to subdue not only the grosser sort of carnal lusts, but even the most subtle motions against the spirit, which also war against the soul. He that yields his members instruments of sin, wounds and destroys himself with his own sword, Sirach. xxi. 1. and fights at the same time against God with his own weapons. O the unnatural madness! Consequently if we would not be kill'd by our lusts, we must kill them; tho' not by our own power or anger, but by the spirit of God. O Lord, make me sensible of their wills, and earnest in the conflict.

Thus shall we best proclaim abroad
The honours of our Saviour God;
When the salvation reigns within,
And grace subdues the pow'r of sin.
Our flesh and sense must be deny'd,
Passion and envy, lust and pride;

Whilst justice, temp'rance, truth and love,
Our inward piety approve.
Religion bears our spirits up,
While we expect that blessed hope,
The bright appearance of the Lord,
And faith stands leaning on his word.

24 June.

(175)

IF God be for us, who can be against us; he who spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things? Even his holy Spirit which he promised us so often, and is purchased a'ready by Christ, Luke xi. 5—13.) Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us, Rom. viii. 31—34. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings, which cannot be uttered, Ver. 26. see also the 15th and 16th verses of this chapter.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost being for me, nay mine own, all that belongs to them, even the whole heaven is mine, and he pours down continually the blessings of his grace, for the never-ceasing intercessions and cryings of Christ's blood: for thro' my Mediator and Minister of the true tabernacle my prayer ascends to God, and all the fulness of God descends to me. O that only my heart was always wide open to receive the same.

Come, let us lift our joyful eyes
Up to the courts above,
And smile to see our Father there
Upon a throne of love.

The peaceful gates of heav'nly bliss
Are open'd by the Son;
High let us raise our notes of praise,
And reach th' almighty throne.

25 June.

(176)

Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Jer iii. 12. Thou hast received gifts for men, yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them, Psal. lxxviii. 19. My covenant will I not break or alter; Psal. lxxxix. 35. See also what in 1 Pet. iii. 21. is said of our baptismal covenant, and Luke xv. of the prodigal son, how his father went out to meet him, when he returned.

Even when we don't seek God yet, but flee from him, he seeks and longs for us already, shewing us the misery of our condition, and drawing us to his Son. Why should he not receive us now, when we by his drawings come to him, through Christ, earnestly seeking him, and instead of fleeing from him, flee to him. What mother will not willingly receive her once lost, but now returning child again?

Who can describe the joys that rise
Thro' all the courts of paradise,
To see a prodigal return,
To see an heir of glory born?
With joy the Father doth approve
The fruit of his eternal love;

The Son with joy looks down and sees
The purchase of his agonies,
The spirit takes delight to view
The holy soul he form'd anew;
And saints and angels join to sing
The growing empire of their Kings.

26 June.

(177)

AND the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity, Isaiah xxxiii. 24. See also Psal. cxxx. 4. Ezek. xvi. 63. Luke vii. 1 John ii. 1, 2.

In these passages we see that a right belief of the remission of sins, or of justification, constrains us most of all things to fear and love God, which cannot fail of producing true holiness. This faith of a believer hanging upon grace, and fixing its eye on Christ alone, as if there was nothing good in him yet, since all is really but very imperfect; both keeps him in rest and joy, and makes him willing and able to run the christian race; whereas a reliance on works and experiences produce nothing but unbelief, uneasiness, uncertainty and weakness.

There is a voice of sov'reign grace
Sounds from the sacred word;
Oh! ye despairing sinners, come
And trust upon the Lord.

My soul obeys th' almighty call,
And runs to this relief;
I would believe thy promise, Lord;
Oh! help my unbelief.

Stretch out thine arm, victorious king,
My reigning sins subdue;
Drive the old dragon from his seat,
With all his hellish crew.

A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On thy kind arms I fall:
Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus and my all.

M

27 June.

(178)

LET your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when he comes, shall find watching; verily I say unto you that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them; but that servant who knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required, Luke xii. 35, 37, 47, 48. See also John xiii. 27. Ch. xv. 14.

Suffer me never, O my dear Saviour, to be lukewarm, careless and drowsy again; make me evermore vigilant and zealous in drawing the necessary ointment and oil of the spirit from thy blessed name, that I may be always ready, and the light of my faith and love may be burning clearer every day. Let me not commit the foolishness to put off my preparation to future times, but do thou prepare me every hour. Amen.

My drowsy pow'rs, why sleep ye so?

Awake my sluggish soul!

Nothing has half thy work to do,

Yet nothing's half so dull.

We for whom God the Son came down

And labour'd for our good;

How careless to secure that crown

He purchas'd with his blood!

Lord, shall we lie so sluggish still,

And never act our parts!

Come, holy dove, from th' heav'nly hill,

And sit and warm our hearts.

28 June.

(179)

Be content with such things as ye have, Heb. xiii. 5. rejoicing (of eternity)
Rom- xii. 12.

A true believer being content, is not much concerned about temporal things. Perhaps he is more afraid of worldly prosperity, goods and money, than of calamities and losses; which sometimes disturb him less than the former. He knows that the hand of God, who supplies him alone, having the whole world and all its treasures at his disposal, can easily command another mind, if one fails. The Lord is his portion, therefore says his soul, will I hope in him, Lament. iii. 24.

My soul forsakes her vain delight,
And bids the world farewell;
Base as the dirt beneath my feet,
And mischievous as hell.

There's nothing round this spacious earth
That suits my large desire;
To boundless joy and solid mirth
My nobler thoughts aspire.

M 2

Where pleasure rolls its living flood,
From sin and dross refin'd,
Still springing from the throne of God,
And fit to cheer the mind.

Had I the pinions of a dove,
I'd climb the heav'nly road;
There sits my Saviour dress'd in love,
And there my smiling God.

29 June.

(180)

LET no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers : and grieve not the holy spirit of God. Let not filthiness be once named among you. nor foolish talkings, nor jesting, which are not convenient, Eph. iv. 29. Chap. v. 4.

Idle words are hurtful words! they grieve the holy Spirit, destroy what power has been obtained by prayer, and cause nothing but levity and distraction of mind; Let this be a caution against talking too much; for if it does not tend to the glory of God, it is nothing but corrupt communication. May all christians take heed to refrain their tongues, and never speak unadvisedly, but always consider first whether their words can be profitable to others, and acceptable to God in heaven. O Lord, teach me by thy wisdom, to put a lock to my mouth, and to weigh every word like gold. Let my heart and lips be moved and governed by thy holy spirit, that both my silence and talking may be according to thy will and direction. Grant that I may always chiefly converse with thee in prayers and thanksgiving, for the good of my own soul and others. And whenever I am to open my lips in due time, let my words be so seasoned and blessed as to administer grace to the hearers.

So let our lips and lives express
The holy gospel we profess;

So let our words and virtues shine
To prove the doctrine all divine.

30 June

(181)

L E T us not be weary in well doing : for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good, Gal. vi. 9.

Riches and goods are not given unto us to heap them up, to take delight in the counting of them, and to sully both hands and hearts at once with the same. In telling our money we might well pray, Lord, keep me from covetousness, teach me so to reckon my money in faith as never to besmear my heart, as it does my fingers, and make me wise and willing to do good in time, that I may improve all opportunities and gifts, to the best and eternal purposes ; and may not neglect or misapply any. What more precious in the whole universe than time ? every minute is a part of eternity, which if well spent, brings a glorious fruit in heaven. It is a thousand pities that they should often so shamefully be trifled away, or not redeemed enough to the sowing of a good seed for eternity. O, the dreadful loss of so many precious hours, of which we cannot reap a blessed fruit in the world to come !

Life is the time that God has giv'n
To 'scape from hell and fly to heav'n ;
The day of grace, and mortals may
Secure the blessings of the day,

Then what my thoughts design to do,
My hands, with all your might pursue ;
Since no device, nor work is found,
Nor faith, nor hope, beneath the ground ;

1 July.

(182)

TEACH me to do thy will, for thou art my God: thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness, Ps. cxliii. 10. Divine answer. He that has mercy on them, shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall be guide them, Isa. xlix. 10. I will bring the blind by a way that they know not, I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them, Chap. xlii. 16.

Believing souls resting on the merits of Christ, do not make it their business legally to fulfil the law, and yet are always a doing the works of the law. Nay, being sensible of their blindness, saying, 'Neither do we know what to do,' they give themselves willingly and entirely up to their heavenly leader, to be guided into all his ways and steps only at his pleasure, praying continually even in the least things.

In thee I trust, to thee I sigh,
And lift my heavy soul on high;
For thee sit waiting all the day,
And wear the tire some hours away.
Break off my fetters, Lord, and show,
Which is the path my feet shall go;

If snarls and foes beset the road,
I flee to hide me near my God.
Teach me to thy holy will,
And lead me to thy heav'nly hill;
Let the good Spirit of thy love
Conduct me to thy courts above.

2 July.

(183)

THOU therefore endure hardness as a soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth intangles himself with the affairs of this Life, 2. Tim. ii.

3. 4.

Our way lying here thro' many tribulations, sorrow and vexation. O what need have we then always to abide in Christ our peace, quietly and faithfully to keep to his word, and to be instant in prayer. Thus we will certainly be delivered at last, tho' we were in the utmost straits. Nay, every thing, even the sufferings themselves, are nothing but salvation and a sowing for eternity, which we must look for and depend upon.

When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies,
I bid farewell to ev'ry fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes.

Should earth against my soul engage,
And hellish darts be hurl'd,
Then I can smile at Satan's rage,
And face a frowning world.

Let cares like a wild deluge come,
And storms of sorrow fall;
May I but safely reach my home,
My God, my heav'n, my all:

There shall I bathe my weary soul
In seas of heav'nly rest,
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across a peaceful breast.

M 4

3 July.

(184)

LEARN of me for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls, Matth. xi. 29. Be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time, 1 Pet. v. 5, 6. Judith ix. 13.

Such as are haughty and self-conceited rush against the mighty hand of God and destroy themselves: but those that bow and humble under it, will be protected by the same. Whatever skill of learning and demonstration we may acquire in the schools of human sciences, if we do not learn to be lowly in heart, and dead to the world, the scripture does not allow us to be truly wise and enlightened, but calls us poor, blind, miserable, worldly students of glory, Prov. xi. 2. 1 Cor. 1st and 2d Chap. Therefore St. Austin says, 'The more a man dies to this world, the more is he enlightened.

Is there ambition in my heart?

Search, gracious God, and see;

Or do I act a haughty part?

Lord, I appeal to thee.

I charge my thoughts, be humble still,

And all my carriage mild;

Content, my Father, with thy will,
And quiet as a child.

The patient soul, the lowly mind
Shall have a large reward;

Let saints in sorrow lie resign'd,
And trust a faithful Lord.

4 July.

(185)

LOVE the Lord, all ye his saints, Psal. xxxi. 23.

It is highly necessary for all, even the most religious, but especially for young people, to avoid a familiar conversation with persons of the other sex. The corruption of our nature being too great, and the enemy too cunning, it may, at least, produce an addictedness inconsistent with the love of Christ, and have a bad appearance, which will be matter of grief to the righteous, and of slander to the wicked. But to cleave only to Christ is the best preservative against the love of creatures.

Come holy Spirit, heav'nly dove,

With all thy quick'ning pow'rs,

Kindle a flame of sacred love

In these cold hearts of ours.

Look how we grovel here below,

Fond of these trifling toys:

Our souls can neither fly nor grow

To reach eternal joys.

Dear Lord! and shall we ever lie

At this poor dying rate?

Our love so faint, so cold to thee,

And thine to us so great.

Come holy Spirit, heav'nly dove,

With all thy quick'ning pow'rs;

Come shed abroad a Saviour's love,

And that shall kindle ours.

5 July.

(186)

LOVE ye your enemies and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward shall be great. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful; give and it shall be given unto you good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over, Luke vi. 35—38. Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward, Matth. x 42. For, In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me, Chap. xxv. 40. God loveth a cheerful giver: God is able to make all grace abound towards you. He that ministers seed to the sower can minister your food, and multiply your seed sown, 2 Cor. ix. 7, 8, 10.

Who will refuse the sower his victuals? The more we bestow upon others, the more the Lord bestows upon us again. The more plentifully we sow, the more the seed will multiply here to sow more, and the more our harvest will be blessed, Prov. xvii. 18. Eccles. xi. 1—6.

Happy is he that fears the Lord,
And follows his commands;
Who lends the poor without reward,
Or gives with liberal hands.

As pity dwells within his breast
To all the sons of need;
So God shall answer his request
With blessings on his seed.

6 July.

(187)

LOOSE them and bring them unto me; and if any say ought unto you, ye shall say, the Lord hath need of them, and straightway he will send them. *Matth. xxi. 2, 3.* The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands, *Judges xv. 14.*

Thus the Spirit of the Lord makes us free from all spiritual bonds; for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, *2 Cor. iii. 17.* Tho' I was tore from Christ by the enemy; yet as a robber he gets no right to me. Christ does not give up for this reason his right, which he has to me on so many accounts; and as soon as I am willing by his grace to give up myself to him, and desire to be delivered from the power of satan, he vindicates and saves me as his property; I am his, satan loses his hold, and nothing in the world can withhold me from him. all the fetters must fall off.

What tho' the hosts of death and hell
All arm'd against me stood,
'Terrors no more shall shake my soul;
My refuge is my God.
Arise, O Lord, fulfil thy grace,
While I thy glory sing:

My God has broke the serpent's teeth,
And death has lost his sting.
Salvation to the Lord belongs,
His arm alone can save:
Blessings attend thy people here,
And reach beyond the grave.

7 July.

(188)

MAKE you a new heart and a new spirit, Ezek. xviii. 31. See also
2 Cor. v. 17, 18—21.

Many are converted, but not intirely to Christ, and from their own righteousness, so as to be truly sensible of their wickedness and abomination, and earnestly to flee to Christ for reconciliation and righteousness ; and therefore never get their hearts changed, but continue on in their mere outward moral state years after years. O Lord, let me daily receive a word from thee, to nourish and strengthen my soul, so as to be renewed daily by it more and more.

Not all the outward forms on earth,
Nor rites that God has giv'n,
Nor will of man, nor blood, nor birth,
Can raise a soul to heav'n.

The sov'reign will of God alone
Creates us heirs of grace,
Born in the image of his Son,
A new peculiar race.

The spirit like some heav'nly wind,
Blows on the sons of flesh,
New-models all the carnal mind,
And forms the man afresh.

Our quicken'd souls awake and rise
From the long sleep of death ;
On heav'nly things we fix our eyes,
And praise employs our breath.

8 July.

(189)

MARTHA, *Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things,*
Luke x. 41. *Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the*
issues of life, Prov. iv. 23.

As the virtue of a strong spirituous liquor evaporates by degrees in a vial which is not closely stopped, in like manner the life and power of the spirit insensibly vanishes away, if the heart is not kept with all diligence. Of the former remains only water; of the latter, nothing but the foam of religion; or perhaps some false principles and errors are crept in. Therefore many must be tried and sifted, that they might know like Hezekiah, what is in their hearts, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. consequently, what more needful, than to take heed to our own spirit, and to keep close to the written word; for as the latter times draw nearer, the more plausible will errors and seducements appear both on your right hand and on your left, to be drawn off from the truth, either by the false worldly prudence, or the pretended spiritual form of fanatics.

O Lord, permit me not to be
A stranger to myself and thee;
Amidst a thousand thoughts I rove,
Forgetful of my highest love.
Call away from flesh and sense,
One sov'reign word can draw me thence;

I would obey the voice divine,
And all inferior things resign.
Be earth with all her scenes withdrawn;
Let noise and vanity be gone:
In secret silence of the mind,
My heav'n and there my God I find.

9 July.

(190)

MY soul thirsteth after thee as a barren land, Psal. cxliii. 6. Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely Rev. xxii. 17. If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believes on me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water, John vii. 37, 38.

When thou art so dry and barren, examine thyself closely what may be the cause; ask pardon for all offences, and take care to mend them. And tho' thou shouldest not find any thing particular, yet humble thyself deeply before the Lord; but at the same time remember that thou art accepted, beloved, just and blessed in Christ, and in this disposition quietly wait the returns of some new drops of living water and grace; but be also sure afterwards to cherish and make a right use of them. Thus thou shalt be like a watered garden, Isa. lviii. 11.

For thee I thirst, O Lord, I mourn;
When will thy smiling face return?

Shall all my joys on earth remove?
And God for ever hide his love?

A N S W E R.

Ho! ye that pant for living streams,
And pine away and die;
Here you may quench your raging thirst
With springs that never dry.

Rivers of love and mercy here
In a rich ocean join;
Salvation in abundance flows,
Like floods of milk and wine.

10 July.

(191)

MY soul waiteth upon God: from him comes my salvation; he is only my defence, I shall not be greatly moved. Therefore, trust in him at all times, ye people, pour out your hearts before him. God is a refuge for us. Psal. lxiii. 2, 3, 9.

The more quiet, patient, believing, faithful, ardent and single we are, the sooner we shall see the salvation and victory of the Lord. Double-minded souls have the greatest struggle, and the slothful must tarry the longer. Sometimes, it is true, tho' we are faithful, yet we must cry out, *O Lord how long?* Psal. vi. 4. But nevertheless he always hears and delivers us, tho' we do not see and feel it directly, but seem to suffer continually. In heaven we shall certainly see it, and reap the blessed fruits of all our afflictions and prayers.

My spirit looks to God alone;
My rock and refuge is his throne;
In all my fears, in all my straits,
My soul on his salvation waits.
Trust him, ye saints, in all your ways;
Pour out your hearts before his face:

When helpers fail, and foes invade,
God is our all-sufficient aid.
For sov'reign pow'r reigns not alone,
Grace is a partner of the throne:
Thy grace and justice, mighty Lord,
Shall well divide our last reward.

11 July.

(192)

MY soul fainteth for thy salvation. My soul is continually in my hand. Uphold me according to thy word, that I may live, and let me not be ashamed of my hope. Look thou upon me and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name, Psal. cxix. 81, 109, 116, 132.

O Lord, I love thy name also, since thou art called merciful, gracious, long-suffering, and even the Lord our righteousness: and therefore I depend upon nothing of my own, but throw myself intirely upon thy free grace and righteousness, which keeps me alone in peace. Without thee I am ignorant and weak, and satan being as wicked as he is cunning, what would become of me, if I was not kept and preserved by thee?

The arms of everlasting love
Beneath my soul be plac'd ;
And on the rocks of ages set
My slipp'ry footsteps fast.
'The city of my blest'd abode
Is wall'd around with grace ;

Salvation for a bulwark stands
To shield the sacred place.
Satan may vent his sharpest spite,
And all his legions roar ;
Almighty mercy guards my life,
And bounds his raging pow'r.

12 July.

(193)

MINE iniquities are gone over my head as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me, Ps. xxxviii. 5. Divine answer. Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sins of the world, John i. 29. Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, Zech. iii. 4.

Christ thy surety has taken away thy sins already from thee in one day, by one offering; and he having satisfied divine justice, and being cleared and absolved from all sins as the surety, thou hast in him received the same favour. The chief absolution is passed already, of which thou hast also been made partaker in baptism. And tho' the presumptuous have no sufficient reason to believe the forgiveness of their sins on that account; yet the faithful have none to doubt of it, the word of God removing all their doubts.

Here, sinners, you may heal your wounds.

And wipe your sorrows dry;

Trust in the mighty Saviour's name,

And you shall never die.

So strange, so boundless was the love

That pity'd dying men,

The Father sent his equal Son

To give them life again.

See, dearest Lord, our willing souls

Accept thine offer'd grace;

We bless the great Redeemer's love,

And give the Father praise.

N

13 July.

(194)

M*Y beloved is mine and I am his, Canticles ii. 16. Divine answer. I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment and in loving kindness. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord, Hos. ii. 19, 20.*

By faith in the blood of Christ we are accepted, and closely united to him as our bridegroom. By that we daily eat his flesh, drink his blood, and are sprinkled all over, since even the best of our works, our prayers and other performances still want it continually ; as appears from the type, *Heb. ix. 19, 20, 21.* where it is said, that ‘ all the vessels of the ‘ ministry, and even the book was sprinkled.’

Hark ! the Redeemer from on high,
Sweetly invites his fav'rites nigh ;
From caves of darkness and of doubt
He gently speaks, and calls us out.
My sister and my spouse, he cries,
Bound to my heart by various ties ;
Thy pow'ful love my heart detains
In strong delight and pleasing chains.

Dear Lord, our thankful heart receives
The hope thine invitation gives :
To thee our joyful lips shall raise
The voice of prayer and of praise.
I am my love's, and he is mine ;
Our hearts, our hopes, our passions join ;
Nor let a motion, nor a word,
Nor thought arise to grieve my Lord.

14 July.

(195)

*W*HEN thou saidst, *Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek*, Pf. xxviii. 8. *I am thine, save me: for I have sought thy precepts*, Pf. cxix. 94. *Divine answer. They who seek me early, shall find me*, Prov. vii. 17. *The humble shall see this and be glad, and your heart shall live that seek God*, Pf. lxix. 33. *Seek and you shall find*, Mat. vii. 8. *And whoever finds me, finds life*, Prov. viii. 35. *For I am the life*, John xiv. 6.

Such arguments and intreaties we may use with God, to strengthen us in faith; he does not want them, but we do, and he is well pleased, when we take him at his word. For if we would not draw near to God in prayer till our hearts were quickened, perhaps we might never come to it. Therefore we must not indulge ourselves, in such a state of dulness, but rather put a force upon ourselves, and pray against our natural inclination. Being faithful and instant in this, we will certainly have our affections warmed and great power and blessings given from above, that our hearts may live. O Lord, I plead thy precious promises and all thy former deliverances. Thou canst not deny thy word; I am a child of thy covenant, and thou hast laid thyself under an obligation to help me out, nay to abide, to live and reign in me, that I may not grieve and lose thee any more by my sins.

Lord, I address thy heav'nly throne:
Call me a child of thine,
Send down the spirit of thy Son
To form my heart divine.

There shed thy choicest love abroad,
And make my comforts strong;
Then shall I say; my Father God,
With an unwav'ring tongue.

15 July.

(196)

O My God I trust in thee, let me not be ashamed Psal. xxv. 2. In thee O Lord, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God, xxxviii. 15. Let none that wait on thee be ashamed, xxv. 3 Divine answer. Hope makes not ashamed, Rom. v. 5. They that trust in the Lord shall be at mount Zion, which abideth for ever, Psal. cxxv. 1. Who was ever put to shame that trusted in God? Sirach. ii. 11. Pray for help, and though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry, Hab. ii 3. Then thou shalt know, &c. Isa. xlix. 33,

Does God delay his promises, and the enemy raise a suspicion against his faithfulness? remember that it is said: **W A I T**. Thou art still in being, and shalt be a witness to God's faithfulness. If he was not faithful and true, he could not be God. His faithfulness is eternal and as sure and great as himself; above all our thoughts. Thou shalt at last the more gloriously experience it, and not be ashamed: sooner shall heaven and earth pass away. "He keeps truth for ever," Ps. cxlvi. 6.

Happy the man whose hopes rely
On Israel's God: He made the sky,
And earth and seas with all their train;
And none shall find his promise vain:

His truth for ever stands secure:
He saves th'oppress'd, he feeds the poor;
He sends the lab'ring conscience peace.
And grants the prisoner sweet release.

16 July.

(197)

MAN, *thou must die*, Sirach, xiv. 18. *Therefore, be not deceived, God is not mocked: for what a man sows that he shall reap*, Gal. vi. 7.

A certain true and faithful servant of God declared upon his death-bed, *that the last things should be more frequently laid before people, and seriously pressed upon them*. This was the practice of St. Paul himself, tho' he was of an uncommon evangelical spirit, *Acts* xxiv. 25. Such representations may be very useful at this time, and perhaps still more for the time to come, to restrain that growing levity and indifference in spiritual and gospel matters. For this false and unevangelical method of playing with the wounds of Christ does not stand its ground, nor will it avail us in the hour of death. Many will then find their joy changed into heaviness, and others their heaviness into joy.

Life is the time to serve the Lord,
The time t'insure the great reward;
And while the lamp holds out to burn
The vilest sinner may return.

The living know that they must die,
But all the dead forgotten lie;
Their mem'ry and their sense is gone,
Alike unknowing and unknown.

Their hatred and their love is lost,
Their envy buried in the dust;
They have no share in all that's done
Beneath the circuit of the sun.

There are no acts of pardon pass'd
In the cold grave to which we haste;
But darkness, death and long despair
Reign in eternal silence there.

17 July.

(198)

MOSES said, *there shall not a hoof be left behind. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste, Exod. x. 26. and xii. 33. Behold we have forsaken all, and followed thee. Whosoever be of you that forsakes not all that he has, he cannot be my disciple, Luk. xiv. 34. And they that rejoice, as tho' they rejoiced not, 1 Cor. vii. 29—31.*

Christ being my all, self-denial and following him is so easy and pleasant, that there is no need to make a particular work and duty of it. And if I am his property and have intirely devoted myself to him, I neither dare, nor will reserve anything for myself; and yet I have no reason to be troubled for any thing, but can safely trust and leave all to him. He will certainly take care of me, protect and perfect me in the best manner.

How can I sink with such a prop
As my eternal God,
Who bears the earth's huge pillars up
And spreads the heav'ns abroad.
How can I die while Jesus lives,
Who rose and left the dead?
Pardon and grace my soul receives
From mine exalted head.

All that I am, and all I have
Shall be for ever thine;
Whatever my duty bids me give,
My chearful hands resign,
Yet if I might make some reserve,
And duty did not call,
I love my God with zeal so great,
That I should give him all,

18 July.

(199)

UNT O thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul, Pl. xxv. 1. Divine answer.
*Thou hast heard the desire of the humble, thou wilt prepare their heart,
thou wilt cause thine ear to hear, Pl. x. 7.*

Faith only desires Christ and does neither delight in the gain, nor grieve much in the loss of temporal things; but as Luther says, 'faith through an earnest desire for Christ and his word, rises above all creatures, and overcomes all worldly pleasures and fears.' And this being the work of God, will certainly be accomplished, nay, is looked upon as really accomplished already in our desires and endeavours after it; in the same manner as evil desires are reckoned for deeds in the sight of God, tho' they never proceeded to over-acts.

I cannot bear this absence, Lord,
My life expires if thou depart:
Be thou, my heart, still near my God,
And thou, my God, be near my heart.
I was not born for earth and sin,
Nor can I live on things so vile;

Yet I will stay my Father's time,
And hope and wait for heav'n awhile.
Then dearest Lord, in thine embrace,
Let me resign my fleeting breath,
And with a smile upon my face,
Pass the Important hour of death.

19 July.

(200)

DRAW near in the day that I call upon thee : say unto me, fear not, O Lord, plead thou the cause of my soul and redeem my life. Lam. iii. 57. 58. God's Answer : Fear not, for I am with thee, Isai. xliii. 5. I am he that lives and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and death, Rev. i. 18.

“ Christ has overcome death, led captivity captive, and by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified,” Heb x. 14. Whoever leaves this world, believing in him, being perfected already, has nothing to fear after death. O ! my heavenly Father, grant that the imperfect work of sanctification may humble me much, but cause no fear of death nor disturb my filial confidence ; since this does not depend on any particular degree of holiness, but only on my being in Christ, and being adopted through him, which the weakest child, as well as the strongest may boldly believe ; having both like right, like grace, and like pardon. Being therefore a child, I am an heir, and shall find life and deliverance in death.

Exalted at his Father's side
Sits our victorious Lord ;
To heav'n and hell his hands divide
The vengeance or reward,

The saints from his propitious eye,
Await their several crowns,
And all the sons of darkness fly
The terror of his frowns.

20 July

(201)

T A K E the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, Eph. vi. 17. 18. Continuing instant in prayer, Rom, xii. 12. For every one that asketh, receiveth (out of the fulness of Christ, grace for grace) and he that seeketh, finds, and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened; for if ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? Luke xi. 10, 13,

A sword is necessary for battle; and if I use the word of God against sin by faith in Christ, with prayer I encounter it at last effectually; and in the mean time I engage in this conflict willingly, at least as to the Spirit: for as long as we remain in the flesh and are not all spirit, our combats with sin are made with some backwardness, which if we did not strive against, many prayers and other good actions would intirely be left undone. May the Lord grant us all a mortal hatred against sin, and true earnestness in the conflict with it.

These weapons of the holy war,
Of what almighty force they are,
To make our stubborn passious bow,
And lay the proudest rebel low,

Great King of grace my heart subdue,
I would be led in triumph too.
A willing captive to my Lord
And sing the vict'ries of his word.

21 July

(202)

7 *A K E, eat ; this is my body : and drink ye all of it, for this is my blood
of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins,
Math. xxvi. 26.*

This supper, as Luther observes, requires nothing of us, but give^s every thing freely ; we bring nothing with us, but receive every thing there ; we are not to prepare and adorn ourselves ; but rather to come naked, poor and miserable. For why do we go to the sacrament ? but that we may learn truly to believe that Christ died for our sins. This is the greatest art and principal part of christianity, the intire work of God, which humbles us most, but at the same time affords the greatest peace and strength. Some may vainly imagine to have learnt this well enough, but real christians must make it their particular study to learn this lesson better every day.

Lord, how divine thy comforts are !

How heav'nly is the place,
Where Jesus spreads the sacred feast
Of his redeeming grace !

There the rich bounties of our God,
And sweetest glories shine ;

There Jesus says, that I am his
And my beloved's mine.

What, shall we pay our heav'nly King
For grace so vast as this ?

He brings our pardon to our eyes,
And seals it with a kiss.

22 July.

(203)

TAKE therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which has ten talents, for unto him that hath shall be given and he shall have abundance. But from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath, Mat. xxv. 28, 29. He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much, and he that is unjust in the least, is also unjust in much, Luke xvi. 10.

God requires nothing but faithfulness ; with this thou needest not to fear any thing, nor to say : If only such and such a thing was not in the way ; but rather confidently believe that all is thine, and will work together for thy good. Nay, what seems to be most dangerous may perhaps prove most advantageous ; so that if it were wanting, it would be the same as if the clock was without its weights. By fidelity our gifts and graces will be increased and that which is bad turned into good ; which made a certain faithful servant of the Lord in his last moments call upon all the children of God, ‘ To be only faithful, since God is certainly ‘ faithful on his part.’ Whoever therefore desires to be rich in grace, let him mind these words of a dying experienced christian, nay, of Christ himself. Whatever the Lord gives us to know, we must be careful to bring it directly into practice, by watching, prayer and wrestling, if we will be called faithful, and arrive to a state of true life and power. Thus for one drachm of fidelity we shall certainly be rewarded, even in this life, but much more in heaven, with many talents, and also receive that which has been buried by a slothful servant.

23 July.

(204)

NOT unto us, O Lord, not unto us but unto thy name be the glory, Ps. cxv. 1

How little reason have we to glory in any thing of our own, since nothing but sin is ours, which even defiles that which is of God. O Lord, grant that I may always give thee thy own; that I may know of delight and glory but in thee, and have no other design and request but no to live in godly simplicity, innocence and quietness, for "he that walketh uprightly walketh surely, *Prov. x. 9.*" and the best method to have much confidence is to have a single eye which does not seek its own. For whence is all disquietude of mind, but from our own lusts and unmortified affections, which are like the troubled sea? and what affords more peace than to have nothing at heart but the glory of God, and to count ourselves worthy of no good. Thus we shall be enabled to call our misfortunes a happiness, and be satisfied and praise the Lord as much when he has taken something from us, as if he had granted a blessing, being sure that it tends to our good and to his glory, which he knows best how to promote, and that nothing but sin can make us unhappy and miserable.

Great God! how infinite art thou!
What worthless worms are we!
Let the whole race of creatures bow,
And pay their praise to thee.

Our lives through various scenes are drawn,
And vex'd with trifling cares,
While thine eternal thought moves on
Thine undisturb'd affairs.

24 July.

(205)

NO man can serve two masters, Matth. vi. 24.

O! Lord, as thou hast given thy whole self to me, how should I dare to offer thee only the half of my heart? O! no, I am wholly thine. Here I resign my body, soul and spirit again into thy hands for an intire sacrifice. Grant that I may always be constant, pure, and single towards thee, Amen and Amen.

How vain are all things here below!

How false, and yet how fair!

Each pleasure has its poison too,

And every sweet a snare.

The brightest things below the sky

Give but a flatt'ring light;

We should suspect some danger nigh,

Where we possess delight.

Our dearest joys and nearest friends

The partners of our blood,

How they divide our weav'ring mind,

And leave but half for God!

The fondness of a creature's love,

How strong it strikes the sense!

Thither the strong affections move,

Nor can we call them thence.

Dear Saviour, let thy beauties be

My soul's eternal food;

And grace command my heart away

From all created good.

25 July.

(206)

BUT we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, 2 Cor. iii 18. Therefore, let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus, Phil. ii. 5. For he has left us an example that we should follow his steps, 1 Pet. ii 21.

If, before we say or do any thing, we would but always consider whether it was agreeable to the pattern of Christ, a multitude of sins would not be committed. O Lord, however miserable I am, when I humble myself before thee with a filial confidence, looking upon myself as united to thee, and, as the vilest of sinners, depending only upon thy free grace, I enjoy peace. Grant therefore, O my God, that this beholding of thee, may be my constant exercise, and that by this means I may be strengthened cheerfully to follow thy pattern dai'y, to be changed more and more into the glorious image of thy love, patience, and humility, and thus to be truly prepared for eternal life.

My dear Redeemer and my Lord!
I read my duty in thy word;
But in thy life the law appears,
Drawn out in living characters.
Such was thy truth and such thy zeal,
Such def'rence to thy Father's will,

Such love and meekness so divine,
I would transcribe, and make them mine.
Be thou my pattern, make me bear
More of thy gracious image here;
Then God the judge shall own my name
Amongst the foll'wers of the Lamb.

26 July.

(207)

BEING justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. v. 1. For he is our peace, Eph. ii 11. There is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit, Rom. viii. 1.

A justified soul must not only study to be diligent and punctual in the duties of holiness, which may turn into a legal working, and bring it under the law again; but must before all things continually endeavour to enjoy the peace of Christ and the blessings of salvation, that its sanctification may proceed from faith, and be of the right kind. We must first receive Christ, and be strong in faith, then shall we be able to give, to love, and to work. O may the Author and finisher of faith give me always such a faith.

Our guilty spirits dread
To meet the wrath of heav'n,
But in his righteousness array'd
We see our sins forgiv'n.
Unholy and impure
Are all our thoughts and ways,

His hands infected nature cures
With sanctifying grace.
Lord, we adore thy ways,
To bring us near to God,
Thy sov'reign power, thy healing grace,
And thine atoning blood.

27 July.

(208)

THOU I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me, Ps. xxiii. 4. See also Exod. xiv. of the deliverance of the Israelites and the destruction of the Egyptians in the red sea

To rejoice in the light is certainly most agreeable, but not always so profitable to every one. as sometimes to walk in the dark, nay in the valley of the shadow of death. In this condition some are more humble and cautious than in the former, and the preciousness of the glimpses of grace is more valued. O Lord, I will now willingly rely upon thy bare word, even when deprived of sensible comforts; grant only that in death I may be refreshed by the light of thy countenance. Amen, yes, thou hast promised *that the righteous shall have hope in his death.* Prov. xiv. 32.

Death cannot make our souls afraid,
If God be with us there;
We may walk through our darkest shade
And never yield to fear.
May I but climb to Pisgah's top
And view the promis'd land,

My flesh itself shall long to drop,
And pray for th' command.
Clasp'd in my heav'nly Father's arms,
I shall forget my breath,
And lose my life among the charms
Of so divine a death.

28 July.

(209)

*W*H O shall set scourges over my thoughts, and the discipline of wisdom over mine heart? that they spare me not for mine ignorances, and it pass not by my sins, Sirach. xxiii. 2.

Thoughts are by no means toll-free in the sight of God, and evil thoughts do not always proceed even in the hearts of believers from immediate injections of satan, but also very often from their own natural corruption, which ought to humble them the more, Mark vii. 21, 22, 23. Being therefore alwas in danger from the darkness and wickedness of my heart, I have always need to be employed in the word, and in prayer. Assist my weakness, O Lord, that by the inspiration of thy holy spirit, I may always think right, and be put in mind of every thing in its due season.

Sin, like a venomous disease,
Infects our vital blood:
The only balm is sov'reign grace,
And the physician, God.
Madness, by nature, reigns within
The passions burn and rage,
'Till God's own Son with skill divine
The inward fire assuage.

We lick the dust, we grasp the wind,
And solid good despise:
Such is the folly of the mind,
'Till Jesus makes us wise.
We give our souls the wounds they feel,
We drink the pois'nous gall,
And rush with fury down to hell;
But heav'n prevents the fall.

O

29 July

(210)

O P E N thou mine eyes that I may see wonderful things out of thy law,
Pfal. cxix. 18. Lighten mine eyes lest I sleep the sleep of death, Pf. xiii.
3. For with thee is the fountain of life, in thy light shall we see light,
Pfal. xxxvi. 9. Divine answer. I am come a light into the world, that
whosoever believes in me should not abide in darkness, John xii. 46. The
Lord opens the eyes of the blind, Psal. cxlvi. 8.

Many imagine, that their eyes are opened and that they have clear notions of religion in their head; but they see just like Eve after eating the forbidden fruit, their hearts being corrupted and destitute of simplicity, a most essential part of a christian. For he that does not understand the word of God by the light of the holy spirit through prayer and faith, but only by his natural reason, is certainly blind still, Rev. iii. 17. and one devilish and plausible temptation to error and sin, is enough to break the strongest chains of demonstration, for it is only faith that gets the victory, 1 John v. 4.

The souls enlight'ned from above
With joy receive the word;
They see what wisdom, pow'r and love
Shines in their dying Lord.
The vital savour of his name
Restores their fainting breath;

But unbelief perverts the same
To guilt, despair and death,
'Till God diffuse his graces down,
Like show'rs of heav'nly rain
In vain Apollos sows the ground
And Paul may plant in vain.

30 July.

(211)

WITHOUT me ye can do nothing. Therefore, abide in me, John
xv. 4, 5.

I can no more do without thee, O ! my dear Saviour, than the branch can without the vine ! keep me therefore always in thee, else I shall have recourse to my own fancied stock of grace, tho' I have been a thousand times convinced of my insufficiency. May I never be left in the least thing to my own strength, but be directed, assisted and blessed by thee in all my doings. For as far as I trust to myself I am distrustful of thee, and consequently weak ; and on the other hand the more I distrust myself, the more I trust to thee and will be strengthened and blessed.

Let the wild leopards of the wood
Put off the spots that nature gives,
Then may the wicked turn to God,
And change their temper and their lives.

As well may [Ethiopian slaves
Wash out the darkness of their skin ;
The dead as well may leave their graves,
As old transgressors cease to sin,

Where vice has held its empire long,
'Twill not endure the least control ;
None but a pow'r divinely strong
Can turn the torrent of the soul.

Great God ! I own thy pow'r divine,
That works to change this heart of mine ;
I would be form'd anew and bless
The wonders of creating grace.

O F F E R unto God thanksgiving and pay the vows unto the most high, and call upon me in the day of trouble. I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me; *whoso offers praise glorifies me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God,* Psal. l. 14, 15, 23. see also Isa. xxv. 9.

Nothing moves God more to hear us, then the glorifying him by faith with thanksgiving, and the keeping up a filial confidence in him; and nothing quickeneth us more in faith, than the finest proofs of the hearing of our prayers. Thus God will certainly hear and deliver us, since all his ways are only designed to strengthen us in faith and to save our souls. What need we then to be afraid in times of trouble? ought we not rather to draw near to God in prayer and thanksgiving and glorify him even beforehand, confidently believing that we shall certainly meet with new deliverances and quickenings of faith.

To what a stubborn frame
Has sin reduc'd our mind!
What strange ungrateful wretches we,
And God as strangely kind.
Turn, turn us, mighty God,
And mould our souls afresh;

Break, sovereign grace, these hearts of stone;
And give us hearts of flesh.
Let old ingratitude
Provoke our weeping eyes,
And hourly as new mercies fall,
Let hourly thanks arise.

1 Aug.

(213)

SAY ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings, Isa. iii. 10. Therefore mark the perfect man and behold the upright : for the end of that man is peace, Ps. xxxvii. 37.

Many are for having that first which is to be expected at the end ; they would be glad of the triumph, but will not fight ; the waiting for the Lord seems to them too long : but for the most glorious promises we must often wait the longest. Jacob was obliged to wait longer than Esau, tho' he had greater promises than he : and how long was it before the promise of Christ, the greatest of all, was accomplished ? It is therefore well to be observed, that it is said at last, ' it shall be well with the righteous, and the end of the upright is peace ; ' when his faith, love and patience are tried enough in the furnace of afflictions, then the acceptable year shall come, and the blessed days of joy will appear.

As sparks break out of burning coals,
And still are upwards borne ;
So grief is rooted in our souls,
And man grows up to mourn :
Yet with my God I leave my cause,
And trust his promis'd grace ;

He rules me by his well-known laws
Of love and righteousness.
Not all the pains that e'er I bore
Shall spoil my future peace,
For death and hell can do no more
Than what my Father please.

2 Aug.

(214)

*Examine me, O Lord, and prove me, try my reins and my heart, Ps. xxvi.
2. Search me, O God, and know my heart, and see if there be any
wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting, Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.*

Would DAVID, the man after God's own heart, not trust himself, but present his heart to the Lord to be tried; much less can or ought we to trust our hearts. 'For he that trusts in his heart,' says the wise man, 'is a fool.' PROV. xxviii. 26. We have more reason to be afraid of our own hearts, as LUTHER observes, than of all other enemies. Have we so much reason to be jealous of our own hearts, and are we so much in the dark oftentimes with regard to the time, the circumstances, and even the reality of our conversion; how careful ought we to be in judging of others? this is assuming the office of the searcher of hearts, censuring the holy Spirit, and confirming him to one manner of working. By experience we find, that it is not with one as with another. Some may be worked upon in quite a different manner from what we have been, and such are perhaps the changes even in one hour, that the end may seem to be no more than the beginning, tho' all goes regular in the sight of God. This should check our judgment of others and make us cautious in advising and directing them in matters which concern their souls.

Lord, search my soul, try every thought;
Tho' my own heart accuse me not,
Of walking in a false disguise,
I beg the trials of thine eyes.

Doth secret mischief lurk within?
Do I indulge some unknown sin?
O turn my feet when e'er I stray,
And lead me in the perfect way.

3 Aug.

(215)

DO *TH* a fountain at the same place send forth sweet water and bitter,
James iii. 11. *What concord has Christ with Belial?* 2 Cor. vi. 15.
Therefore, have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but
rather reprove them. Eph. v. 11. *Be not partaker of other mens sins,* 1 Tim.
v. 22. (which we are, in shewing them the least countenance, or not
reproving them :) *But if a man purge himself from these, he shall be a ves-*
sel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, 2 Tim. ii. 21.

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our-
selves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the
fear of God, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Else we draw back; since there is no
resting or standing still in the way of holiness. Let me therefore daily
press forward, O Lord, so as not to be retarded and tired out, but
rather quickened by every thing.

Pure are the joys above the sky,
And all the region peace;
No wanton lips, nor envious eye,
Can see or taste the bliss.
Those holy gates for ever bar
Pollution, sin and shame;

None shall obtain admittance there
But followers of the lamb.
He keeps the Father's book of life,
There all their names are found;
The hypocrite in vain shall strive
To tread the heav'nly ground.

4 Aug.

(216)

STRIVE to enter in at the strait gate, Luke xiii. 24. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, Phil. ii. 12. Forgetting those things that are behind, I reach forth unto those things which are before, Phil. iii. 13.

He that feeds only upon Christ and yet with fear and trembling works out his salvation, is in the right way; the former preventing discouragement; and the latter presumption. Grant, O Lord, that I may still continue to fight the good fight of faith, and never look back on the flesh-pots of Egypt; and rather 'choose to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.' May nothing but the painful death which thou suffered for me, have always a place in my heart, that thereby all unbelief and slavish fears may be destroyed on one hand, and all security on the other, so as to walk at all times and in all places with holy and filial reverence, as in thy presence, Amen.

So new-born babes desire the breast
To feed, and grow, and thrive;
So saints with joy the gospel taste,
And by the gospel live.
Grace like an uncorrupted seed,
Abides and reigns within;

Immortal principles forbid
The sons of God to sin.
Not by the terrors of a slave
Do they perform his will;
But with the noblest powers they have
His sweet commands fulfil.

5 Aug.

(217)

CREATE in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me, Psal. li. 10. See God's answer Ezek. xi 19, 20.

A glorious promise ! but you may rely upon it. O my soul, and plead it in thy prayer, for it will certainly be accomplished. ' And blessed are ' the pure in heart for they shall see God,' Matth. v. 8. In regard to justification, we are perfectly clean by Christ's atonement : but in regard to sanctification our hearts are not perfectly clean yet, but we have still need to pray, ' Create in me a clean heart.' Amen, O Lord ! may thy blood and spirit cleanse and sanctify me thoroughly from all my sins. Amen.

Bless'd with the joys of innocence

Adam our father stood.

* Till he debas'd his soul to fence,

And eat th'unlawful food.

Now we are born a sensual race,

To sinful joys inclin'd ;

Reason has lost its native place,

And flesh enslaves the mind.

Great God ! renew our ruin'd frame,

Our broken pow'rs restore,

Inspire us with a heavenly flame,

And flesh shall reign no more.

Eternal spirit, write thy law

Upon our inward parts ;

And let the second Adam draw

His image on our hearts.

6 Aug.

(218)

O Taste and see that the Lord is good, blessed is the man that trusteth in him
Pſ. xxxiv. 8. *How excellent is thy loving kindness, O Gd! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings, they shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thine house: and they shall make them drink of the river of thy pleasures,* Pſ. xxxvi. 7, 8. *He fills the hungry with good things and sends the rich empty away,* Luke i. 53. *The full soul lotheth the honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet,* Prov. xxvii. 7.

As it is no subject of boasting with natural men when they can eat and drink, stand and walk; so neither is it with believers, who can spiritually eat and work. May the Lord give us all such a child-like hungry disposition of mind for spiritual things. Praise be to him, that by his free grace he justifies, saves and abundantly fills our poverty with the fatness of his house.

Bless'd are the souls that thirst for grace,
Hungar and long for righteousness;
They shall be well supply'd and fed
With living streams and living bread.
Bless'd Jesus, what delicious fare!
How sweet thy entertainments are!

Never did angels taste above
Redeeming grace and dying love.
Haste then, but with a smiling face,
And spread a table of thy grace:
Bring down a taste of truth divine,
And cheer my heart with sacred wine.

7 Aug.

(219)

SEE that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise. Be ye therefore not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is, Eph. v. 15, 17. That ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence, Phil. i. 10. See also Luke xii. 36.

Believers have nothing more at heart than the will of God ; being once convinced of that, they immediately set about it at all hazards ; but sometimes they cannot come to a thorough true knowledge of the same without great conflicts and patience, *Heb. x. 36.* For the flesh is oftentimes exceeding cunning and forward, often calling out : ‘ But ‘ howsoever let me run,’ 2 Sam. xviii. 23. But the Lord will nevertheless carry them through. Yes, Lord ! this thou hast done innumerable times. O that I might trust thee also for the time to come, and not be so weak in faith any more.

Beloved self must be deny'd,
The mind and will renew'd,
Passion suppress'd and patience try'd,
And vain desires subdu'd.

Flesh is a dang'rous foe to grace,
Where it prevails and rules ;

Flesh must be humbled, pride abas'd,
Lest they destroy our souls

Lord ! can a feeble help less worm
Fulfil a task so hard ?

Thy grace must all my works perform,
And give the free reward.

8 Aug.

(220)

IF ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you, 1 Pet. iv. 14, 19. Rejoice ye in that day and leap for joy, for, behold your reward is great in heaven, Luke vi. 23. Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father who is in heaven, but whosoever shall deny me, &c. Mat. x. 32, 33.

Inward sufferings are greater afflictions than those outward persecutions, which christians bring not upon themselves by giving unnecessary offence, by self-will, imprudent and unseasonable behaviour, soaring beyond the limits of the written word of God: but neither do they shun it, being willing to suffer every thing after the will of God, rather than to hurt the cause of God in the least, and depart a hair's breadth from his express wil, out of complaisance to the world. They openly confess Christ their Lord, and don't mind to be called fools by the wicked, as they are persuaded that at last they will call themselves by that name, *Wisd.* v. 4. therefore they care not for their approbation and praise of the world, but count it a great honour to bear the reproaches of Christ.

Bless'd are the suff'rers who partake
Of pain and shame for Jesus' sake;
Their souls shall triumph in the Lord,
Glory and joy are their reward.

The Lamb shall lead his heav'nly flock
Where living fountains rise,
And love divine shall wipe away
The sorrows of their eyes.

9 Aug.

(221)

TAKE heed to your spirit, Matth. ii. 16. *The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it ?* Jerem. xvii. 9.

Even believers feel this wickedness of their hearts, *Ps. xxx* 7. 8. For the heart, as *Jobu Bunyan* observes, has many secret ways and private loop-holes, in which the diabolists, that is, sinful lusts, can hide themselves so well, that they seem to be quite overcome : but upon occasion, especially when we are careless, they spring up again, tho' sometimes under other and perhaps quite spiritual names. Therefore we ought always to be jealous of ourselves. For the flesh is never more fleshly and dangerous, than when it has the most spiritual appearance, and covers its lusts with the holiness and spirituality of angels.

Sin has a thousand treach'rous arts
To practise on the mind ;
With flatt'ring looks she tempts our hearts
But leaves a sting behind.
With names of virtue she deceives
The aged and the young ;
And while the heedless wretch believes,
She makes his fetters strong

She pleads for all the joys she brings
And gives a fair pretence ;
But cheats the soul of heav'nly things,
And chains it down to sense.
So on a tree divinely fair
Grew the forbidden food ;
Our mother took the poison there.
And tainted all her blood.

10 Aug.

(222)

O Send out thy light and truth, let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill and to thy tabernacles, Ps. xliii. 3. O send thy wisdom out of thy holy heavens, and from the throne of thy glory, that being present she may labour with me, that I may know what is pleasing unto thee, &c. Wisd ix. 4, 10, 17, 19. Divine answer. The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day, Prov. iv. 18.

The wiser we are in our own conceits, the more negligent are we in prayer and more destitute of true wisdom and faith. 'For the Lord gives only sight to the blind and to the babes,' who pray for it. Therefore the deepest humblings go before the greatest blessings. O! my blessed Saviour! since I am always blind and ignorant of myself if I am not guided by thine eyes: I desire always to look up to thee, and do every thing under thy direction.

But few among the carnal wise,
But few of noble race,
Obtain the favour of thine eyes,
Almighty King of grace.
He takes the men of meanest name
For sons and heirs of God;

And thus he pours abundant shame
On honourable blood.
He calls the fool and makes him know
The myst'ries of his grace,
To bring aspiring wisdom low,
And all its pride abase.

11 Aug.

(223)

By grace ye are saved, Ephes. ii. 5.

To rely on grace, and desire to be saved only by free grace, is a sweet exercise, but so far from being practised enough, that we have all need to learn the prayer of the publican better still, since the pharisee and the old monk, as Luther observes, are ever busy to creep in again. But care must be taken, that we do not build our faith only upon the sweet enjoyments of the grace of God in our hearts, but also upon the grace in the heart of God, as it is recovered by Christ and promised to us through Christ. For which reason God sometimes denies us sensible enjoyments, that true faith may begin to act like itself, and depend upon nothing but his free grace in Christ. And this we have also boldness to do, should we even seem to fall short of the due measure of faith, godly sorrow and repentance. For since there is no merit to be placed in these things, there is no certain measure and degree prescribed to all, but it is enough truly to hate sin, to desire grace, and sincerely to enter upon the christian race.

'Tis not by works of righteousness
Which our own hands have done;
But we are saved by sov'reign grace,
Abounding thro' his Son.

'Tis from the mercy of our God
That all our hopes begin;

'Tis by the water and the blood
Our souls are wash'd from sin.
Rais'd from the dead we live anew;
And justif'd by grace,
We shall appear in glory too,
And see our Father's face.

12 Aug.

(224)

***B**E servant in spirit, Rom. xii. 11. That thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead, Revel. iii. 1, 16.*

If thou canst not pray fervently, ask God the reason of it humbly, and accuse thyself in every thing, and come quite empty, poor and miserable, looking upon thyself at the same time as reconciled, just, covered, spotless, accepted, and beloved through Christ. Thus boldly to lay hold on Christ, his Father and the holy spirit, as being thine with every thing, will certainly rouse thee up and make thee fervent again. May the Lord teach me to practise this and keep me ever awake.

Long have I sat beneath the sound
Of thy salvation, Lord:
But still how weak my faith is found,
And knowledge of thy word!
How cold and feeble is my love!
How negligent my fear!
How low my hope of joys above!
How few affections there!

My dear almighty, and my God,
How little art thou known
By all the judgements of thy rod,
And blessings of thy throne!
Great God! thy sov'reign pow'r impart,
To give thy word success;
Write thy salvation in my heart,
And make me learn thy grace.

13 Aug.

(225)

BE ye not as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee, Psal. xxxii. 9. Therefore, if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear, 1 Pet. i. 17.

O wretched man! dost thou really believe that God is the judge of all things, even what is privately done, the secrets of the heart not excepted; how canst thou meet thy judge in this thy security or hypocrisy, without a true change of the heart? dost thou think that there is such a thing as dissembling, excusing or escaping then, as there is now? by no means! O begin therefore in time to consider it well. How wilt thou appear before that awful, holy and impartial judgment-seat? what canst thou answer for thyself! and what must then become of thee?

Think, O my soul, the dreadful day
When this incensed God
Shall rend the sky, and burn the sea,
And sling his wrath abroad!
What shall the wretch the sinner do?
He once defy'd the Lord:

But he shall dread the thund'ring now,
And sink beneath his word.
Tempests of angry fire shall roll,
To blast the rebel worm,
And beat upon his naked soul
In one eternal storm.

14 Aug.

(226)

BE strong and of a good courage. I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Only be thou strong and very courageous! O sweet commandment! be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee, whithersoever thou goest. O glorious promise! Joshua i. 5, 6, 9. Nay I have called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, tho' thou hast not known me. Isa. xlv. 4.

God requires nothing but faith, which removes and does great things, makes chearful, strong and easy in difficulties. Therefore have always the best confidence in God, and fear nothing; for he is with thee in all things. He that has but this one care and fear not to displease him, need not care and fear any thing else. His safety is insured in the promise of God, who will keep him harmless in all things.

Awake our souls (away our fears,
Let ev'ry trembling thought be gone)
Awake and run the heav'nly race,
And put a chearful courage on.
True, 'tis a strait and thorny road,
And mortal spirits tire and faint;

But they forget the mighty God,
That feeds the strength of ev'ry saint,
From him the overflowing spring,
Our souls shall drink a fresh supply,
While such as trust their native strength
Shall melt away, and drop, and die.

15 Aug.

(227)

Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, John i. 29. These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple, Rev. vii. 14, 15.

He that washes himself continually in the blood of Christ, does not make light of sin, but detests it above all things; for what can be more abominable than sin, since it cannot be taken away but by the blood of the Son of God. This humbles and makes us serious; and without this, it is not right with our souls. To speak continually of the blood of the lamb, and yet be puffed up, boast and trifle with sin, cannot agree together.

Now will I hate those lusts of mine
That crucify'd my God,
Those sins that pierc'd and nail'd his flesh
Fast to the fatal wood.
Yes, my Redeemer, they shall die,
My heart has so decreed;

Nor will I spare the guilty things
That made my Saviour bleed.
Whilst with a melting broken heart
My murder'd Lord I view,
I'll raise revenge against my sins,
And slay the murderers too.

P 2

16 Aug.

(228)

VERILY I say unto you, they have their reward, Matth. vi. 3. But the righteous live for evermore: their reward is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the most high. Therefore shall they receive a kingdom of glory, and a crown of beauty at the hand of the Lord: for with his right-hand he will cover them, and with his arm he will protect them. Wisd. v. 16, 17.

For this crown, faith strives. And because this faith justifies, it makes the world say: well, I also believe: but where is their conflict and conquest! it is answered: I rely on Christ and grace; but Canaan was also a free gift of grace, and yet it was not taken without conflicts. And moreover, as worldly people are not acquainted with the wickedness of their hearts, they do not trust alone upon grace, but upon their outward form, self-love and pride reigning in their hearts.

No works nor duties of your own
Can for the smallest sin atone:
The robes that nature may provide
Will not your least pollutions hide.
Ye sons of pride, that kindle coals
With your own hands to warm your souls,

Walk in the light of your own fire,
Enjoy the sparks that ye desire.
This is your portion at my hands,
Hell waits you with her iron bands;
You shall lie down in sorrow there,
In death, in darkness and despair.

17 Aug.

(229)

BEHOLD, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame, Revel. xvi. 15. Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life (which is Christ himself) and may enter in through the gates into the city. Surely I come quickly, Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen, Revel. xxii. 14, 20, 21.

As sin always besets us, so Christ himself and his blood must always be our robes, else there is no peace. The heart must firmly be centred in Christ, and the centre to be fixed upon in the whole progress of inward christianity, is, that we have forgiveness in the blood of Christ: for if this is revealed in the soul by God himself, Heaven and paradise seem to be opened to her.

He is a God of sovereign love,
That promis'd heav'n to me,
And taught my thoughts to soar above
Where happy spirits be.

Prepare me, Lord, for thy right hand:
Then come the joyful day;

P 3

Come death and some celestial band
To bear my soul away.

Haste, my beloved, fetch my soul
Up to thy blest abode;
Fly, for my spirit longs to see
My Saviour and my God.

18 Aug.

(230)

Behold I make all things new, &c. And he said unto me, it is done, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end: I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely, Rev. xxi. 5, 6, 7.

To thirst after Christ and receive him by faith, belongs to justification; but to drink with peace and joy from Christ the fountain of life, is the sealing of faith, and belongs to sanctification, and he's greatly to the promoting of it. Therefore the sealing, assurance and sense of grace is not the same thing with justification, but the fruit of it, which does not always follow directly; and it increases according as the soul drinks more and more from the living stream.

Attend, while God's exalted Son
Doth his own glories shew;
Behold, I sit upon my throne,
Creating all things new.

Such favours as a God can give,
My royal grace bestows;
Ye thirsty souls, come taste the streams
Where life and pleasure flows.

Far from the regions of the dead,
From sin, and earth, and hell;
In the new world that grace has made
I would for ever dwell.

O may I stand before the Lamb,
When earth and seas are fled!
And hear the judge pronounce my name
With blessings on my head.

19 Aug.

(231)

B E H O L D I send an angel (Christ the angel of the covenant) before thee, to keep thee in the ways, and to bring thee in the p'ace which I have prepared, *Exod. xxiii. 20.* And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness, the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those, the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. Christ himself is this way, the new and living way, who gives not only life and strength that we walk and be not wearied, *John xiv. 6.* *Heb. x. 20.* but keeps also the road clear, even the last road of death, for no lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there, *Isa. xxxv. 8, 9.*

O Lord, let me never err from this way, and suffer no other temptation to come near me, but what humbles and stirs me up to prayer and the right use of thy word in faith, that I may be carried through all difficulties, and especially in time of death.

Is he away? he leads to God,
The path is drawn in lines of blood;
There would I walk with hope and zeal,
Till I arrive at Sion's hill,
Aspire, my soul, to glorious deeds,
The captain of salvation leads:

P 4

March on, nor fear to win the day,
Tho' death and hell obstruct the way.
Should death, and hell, and pow'rs unknown,
Put all their forms of mischief on,
I shall be safe; for Christ displays
Salvation in more sov'reign ways.

20 Aug.

(232)

*S*urely they are my people, children that will not lye, &c. Isa. lxiii. 8.
And in their mouth was found no guile, Rev. xiv. 5. Therefore, suffer
the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the
kingdom of God, Mark x. 14.

Bare morality is at best but patch-work. It is attempting to mend
our lives, without the necessary means : when instead of this we should
rather first renounce all our own works, come to Christ without guile
and reserve, and in a word turn and be like a child ; since the privilege
of adoption and the baptismal covenant is not only lost by gross and
outward immoralities, but even by guile and worldly-mindedness.
Therefore moral men must also be born again and become of a harmless
and child-like, tho' not a childish disposition, as many fanciful sectarian
children now, who sometimes trifle and play as it were with the wounds
of Christ and the most sacred things, or at least do not treat them re-
verently enough.

Behold what wondrous grace

The Father has bestow'd

On sinners of a mortal race,

To call them sons of God.

A hope so much divine

May trials well endure,

May purge our souls from sin and sin,

As Christ the Lord is pure.

If in my Father's love

I share a filial part,

Send down thy Spirit like a dove,

To rest upon my heart.

21 Aug.

(233)

THEY are virgins which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes : these were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and unto the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile : for they are without fault before the throne of God, Rev. xiv. 4, 5.

Peter, being still in his presumption, pretended to follow Christ unto death, but when he was truly humbled and near his end, he prudently added to his exhortations in sufferings, ' if need be,' 1 Pet. i. 6. ' if the ' will of God be so,' chap. iii. 17. ' According to the will of God,' chap. iv. 19. This is quite opposite to the spiritual, hypocritical and presumptuous pride and self-will : for many in their own will resolve to be martyrs, and cannot bear so much as only a contradiction.

Give me the wings of faith to rise
Within the veil and see
The saints above, how great their joys,
And bright their glories be.
Once they were mourning here below,
And wet their couch with tears;
They wrestl'd hard, as we do now,
With Sin, and doubts, and fears.

I ask them whence their victory came ?
They, with united breath,
Ascribe their conquest to the lamb,
Their triumph to his death.
They mark'd the footsteps that he trod,
His love inspir'd their breast,
And following their incarnate God,
Possess the promis'd rest.

22 Aug.

(234)

THEY are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world bears them. We are of God, &c. 1 John iv. 5, 6.

What should set us more against the world, than the cross of Christ? and what is generally more turned into security and worldly lusts than this? O! miserable spiders that suck poison out of the sweetest flowers!

When in the light of faith divine

We look on things below,

Honour, and gold, and sensual joy,

How vain, and dang'rous too!

The pleasures that allure our sense

Are dang'rous snares to souls;

There's but a drop of flatt'ring sweet,

And dash'd with bitter bowls.

God is my all-sufficient good,

My portion and my choice.

In him my vast desires are fill'd,

And all my pow'rs rejoice:

In vain the world acosts my ear,

And tempts my heart anew;

I cannot buy your blis so dear,

Nor part with heav'n for you.

23 Aug.

(235)

SHE, Love, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, and never faileth, 1 Cor. xiii. 5, 8.

It being my heart's desire, O my dear heaven'y Father, once to love thee and my neighbour uprightly and ardently, I beg that thou wouldst let me know and enjoy thy love in Christ, which is the only means to come to the same: for how can I possibly be cold and hard, when resting at the cross of Christ, and in thy bosom, I enjoy thy free grace, and truly experience thine infinite love towards me the most miserable and chiefest of sinners, O ! may this melt down and change me thoroughly !

Had I the tongues of Greeks and Jews,
And nobler speech than angels use,
If love be absent I am found,
Like tinkling brass, an empty sound.

Were I inspir'd to preach and tell
All that is done in heav'n and hell,
Or could my faith the world remove,
Still I am wanting, without love.

Should I distribute all my store
To feed the bowels of the poor,
Or give my body to the flame
To gain a martyr's glorious name,
If love to God and love to men
Be absent, all my hopes are vain:
Nor tongues, nor gifts, nor fiery zeal,
The work of love can e'er fulfil.

24 Aug.

((236))

Aug 24

IF a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully, 2 Tim. ii. 5. namely in faith, by which we have victory. And as the enemies return again and again, and always become more crafty and more strong, we must continually be in arms. *Until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, Mat. xi. 12.*

If those cannot expect to be crowned, who strive, but not lawfully, what must become of those who do not strive at all? O Lord, strengthen me therefore to get the victory, for it greatly exalts thy glory if the power of mine enemies is broke: and the least degree of thy grace and strength is able to overcome the greatest power of sin at last, which is thy promise, and cannot fail of being performed, since in the former there is the promise of life and growth, whilst the latter is condemned to death, and actually dies more and more if nailed to the cross of Christ.

Stand up, my soul, shake of thy fears,
And gird the gospel-armour on;
March to the gates of endless joy,
Where thy great captain Saviour's gone.
What tho' the prince of darkness rage,
And waite the fury of his spite?

Eternal chains confine him down
To fiery deeps, and endless night.
What tho' thine inward parts rebel?
'Tis but a struggling gasp for life;
The weapons of victorious grace
Shall slay thy sins and end the strife.

25 Aug.

((237))

SO then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy, Rom. ix. 16. Thou hast a little strength, Rev. iii. 8. But go in this thy might, &c. Surely I will be with thee, Judg. vi 14, 16.

A little strength is also the strength of God through Christ the second Adam, and consequently stronger than the power of satan and the first Adam, should it seem ever so strong. Nay it is the death of the old man already, and kills him by degrees more and more, till at last, when we drop this body of sin, it will destroy him intirely. Believers in such a state may think themselves weaker than before they had any grace, not being able now to put such a force upon themselves as formerly. But it is to be remember'd, that hypocrisie and proud nature, desirous of being seen and taken notice of, sometimes can outdo grace in many outward things, and have a better appearance in the eyes of man: for real christians not being willing to be work'd upon by nature any longer, and yet having but little strength, cannot put such a constraint upon themselves continually, but they may be in this manner tossed to and fro; which the Lord wisely permits for their good, to convince them the mote of their own insufficiency and nothingness, that they may rely only on the strength of the Lord. Therefore we must not give over praying and hoping in this case, but as it is only the mercy and power of Christ, which preserves and strengthens the poor and feeble, we rather ought to be more earnest in drawing near to him with all our misery, weariness, and nakedness.

Mere mortal pow'r shall fade and die,
And youthful vigour cease;

But we that wait upon the Lord,
Shall feel our strength increase.

26 Aug.

(238)

IF after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again intangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning, 2 Pet. ii. 20.

Some not only deny strong temptations, but even all inward evil suggestions and strivings against the same, especially in experienced christians; but it is quite the contrary: for beginners strive generally more against the outward pollutions of the world, whilst the experienced turn their force more against their inward spiritual iniquities. Therefore take heed to your spirit, tho' your meaning be ever so good, and your assurance ever so great. Be not too high-minded, for fear of falling. Beware of all sins; for the least may unawares and by degrees draw thee into many others, so as to be at last intangled in such a manner, that without great watchfulness it will be impossible to be disengaged; therefore be not deceived: flee all occasions of sin. Say not within thyself: it is no matter; it concerns only outward things, which do not belong to the essence of christianity. For such outward levity is a sure evidence of a false inward liberty and lightness of mind. And by conforming to the world we give a good handle to the enemy of souls to ruin us; and by sad experience we shall be convinced in time, that the latter end is worse than the beginning.

○ for a persevering pow'r

To keep thy just commands!

We would defile our hearts no more,

No more pollute our hands,

27 Aug.

(239)

IF it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men, Rom. xii. 18.

There is much contest in the world about *meum* and *tuum*, that is *mine* and *thine*; but believers taking Christ for their only property, whom no body can take from them, have, as much as lies in them, peace with all men, saying:

If by hundreds I can gain,
A farthing's loss makes little pain.

And since wrath and anger turn into nothing but disquietness, and are punished by themselves, why dost thou suffer thyself to be so easily moved by them? the least provocation, even a single word perhaps, will stir up the corruption of the heart, so as to change thy countenance and utter dreadful words. Therefore consider how God bears with thee, and what an abomination anger is. It is a fire from hell, the true image of the old dragon; but being call'd to bear the image of God and bring forth the fruits of the good spirit, thou art to follow the lamb-like mind of Christ, and to that purpose it is highly necessary; first, to avoid all occasions of strife and contention, Secondly, to bridle our tongue, if quarrels arise. Thirdly, to suffer, when we are wronged. Fourthly, to pray directly and quench the sparks of fire before they break out into a flame. This is the easiest and the only method to prevent great troubles, and lead a peaceful happy life, for anger carries uneasiness and love a sweet rest in itself.

Bless'd are the men of peaceful life,
Who quench the coals of growing strife;

They shall be call'd the heirs of bliss;
The sons of God, the God of peace.

28 Aug.

(240)

HAVING therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, &c. Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled, (with the blood of Christ, by which he once entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us, and purges our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God) from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water, Heb. x. 19, 22. Christ has made the purging of our sins by himself; for by one offering he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified, chap. x. 14. And to this sprinkling of the blood of Christ all believers, even the weakest, are come, that is to say, he has the forgiveness of sins in his blood. This is his element and life; thus he lives by the faith of the Son of God, who also loved him, always applying his ransom to his soul, and pleading his merits before his heavenly Father, which keeps his conscience pure and easy.

They find access at ev'ry hour
To God within the vail;
Hence they derive a quick'ning pow'r,
And joys that never fail.

O happy souls! O glorious state
Of ever-flowing grace!
To dwell so near their Father's seat,
And see his lovely face.

29 Aug.

(241)

PUT on therefore (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, &c. and above all these things, put on charity; love, which is the bond of perfection, Col. iii. 12, 13, 14. Judge not, &c. Matth. vii. 1. And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour, Zach. viii. 17.

Therefore let us be watchful against suspicions, always putting the best construction upon the behaviour of our neighbour. For love beareth all things, and hopeth always the best. And since we are mistaken in our judgements a hundred to one, says Mr. professor Frank, we ought to be exceeding cautious, not to be too quick and hasty in judging of others;.

Love suffers long with patient eye,
Nor is provok'd in haste;
She lets the present injury die,
And long forgets the past.
Malice and rage, those fires of hell,
She quenches with her tongue;
Hopes, and believes, and thinks no ill,
Tho' she endure the wrong.

She lays her own advantage by,
To seek her neighbours good;
So God's own Son came down to die,
And bought our lives with blood.
Love is the grace that keeps her pow'r
In all the realms above,
There faith and hope are known no more,
But saints for ever love.

30 Aug.

(242)

HOLD thou me up, and I shall be safe; and I will have respect unto
(delight myself in) thy statutes continually, Psal. cxix. 117.

Tho' the flesh still remains in believers, that they cannot always practise that which is good, without constraint, strife and crucifying the old Man, yet as to the spirit they have delight in the word of the Lord through faith, by the upholding of God: for being humbled on this account, and earnestly craving pardon and strength, they always receive not only peace, but strength for the subduing of the flesh, and doing all things with pleasure.

Eternal Spirit! we confess,
And sing the wonders of thy grace;
Thy pow'r conveys our blessings down,
From God the Father and the Son.

Enlighten'd by thine heav'nly ray,
Our shades and darkness turn to day;
Thine inward teachings make us know
Our danger and our refuge too.

Thy pow'r and glory works within,
And breaks the chains of reigning sin;
Doth our imperious lusts subdue,
And forms our wretched hearts anew.
The troubled conscience knows thy voice,
Thy cheering words awake our joys;
Thy words allay the stormy wind,
And calm the surges of the mind.

31 Aug.

(243)

RISE up, my love, my fair one, and come away; for lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land, &c. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away O! my dove that art in the clefts of the rock, &c. Canticles ii. 10—14.

O Lord! how often has it been winter with me, but thou hast always quickened me again. Grant that by these experiences I may be so used to thy ways, as always to expect the best from thee in every thing, and to have only this one care, namely, how I may please thee as thy bride and dove, and be accepted through thee with thy Father. Let my Faith be strengthened in such a manner by all thy methods, that at last I may have boldness and find rest in thy wounds, since yet there is room for the greatest of sinners, and even for me.

The voice of my beloved sounds
Over the rocks and rising grounds;
O'er hills of guilt, and seas of grief,
He leaps, he flies to my relief.
Gently he draws my heart along,
Both with his beauties and his tongue;
Rise, says my Lord, make haste away,
No mortal joys are worth thy stay.

Q 2

The Jewish wint'ry state is gone,
The mists are fled, the spring comes on,
The sacred turtle-dove we hear
Proclaim the new, the joyful year.
And when we hear our Jesus say,
Rise up, my love, make haste away!
Our hearts would fain out-fly the wind,
And leave all earthly love behind.

1 Sept.

(244)

BE not conformed to this world, Rom. xii. 2. And love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doth the will of God, abideth for ever, 1 John ii. 15, 17.

Reader! whose will dost thou do? examine thyself. Perhaps thou thinkest to love the world and do her will, cannot be so great a sin, since the most honest people do the same. But observe, as thou wouldst be saved, that if thou lovest the world, the love of the Father is not in thee; and without this love of the Father, thou hast no faith; and being destitute of faith, thou hast no Christ, and consequently no life and salvation.

I send the things of earth away;
Away ye tempter of the mind,
False as the smooth deceitful sea,
And empty as the whistling wind.
Your streams were floating me along
Down to the gulf of black despair;
And whilst I listen'd to your song,
Your streams had e'en convey'd me there.

Now to the shining realms above
I stretch my hands, and glance my eyes;
O for the pinions of a dove,
To bear me to the upper skies!
Lord, I adore thy matchless grace,
That warn'd me of that dark abyss;
That drew me from those treach'rous seas,
And bid me seek superior bliss.

2 Sept.

(245)

NOT fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance ;
but as he who has called you is holy, so be ye holy, Note, in all manner of
conversation, 1 Pet. i. 14. 15. Give diligence to make your calling and
election sure ; for the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the
will of the gentiles, &c. 2 Pet. i. 10. 1 Pet. iv. 3.

None can be so sure of his salvation, as to be for ever free from fears
and doubts, for there is no assurance without conflicts : therefore all di-
ligence is required to be evermore sure of it, so as to have boldness even
in death. But let us take heed of presumption since we do not know what
may befall us at last ; and be careful not to despise and overdrive the
weaker sort of christians, that by making general rules of our own ex-
perience, this comfortable doctrine of assurance may not be matter of
torment to others.

How short and hasty is our life !
How vast our souls affairs !
Yet senseless mortals vainly strive
To lavash out their years.
God from on high invites us home
But we march heedless on,
And ever hast'ning to the tomb,
Stoop downwards as we run

How we deserve the deepest hell,
That slight the joys above !
What chains of vengeance should we feel
That break such cords of love !
Draw us, O God ! with sov'reign grace,
And lift our thoughts on high
That we may end this mortal race,
And see salvation nigh.

3 Sept.

(246)

*G*O not after thy lusts, but refrain thyself from thine appetites, Sirach
xviii. 30.

Self will mix too often with the most religious things, which produces nothing but divisions, disorders, and, as it is now in our days, many outward forms of our own invention; nay at last a new sort of popery. O Lord! heal thou the breaches of Zion. Even well-meaning people not denying their own will, and not taking advice from more experienced christians who understand the devices of satan better, may be sifted and lifted up by the enemy, that they must be made humble and wise at the expence of some misfortune or other.

I hate the tempter and his charms,
I hate his flatt'ring breath;
The serpent takes a thousand forms,
To cheat our souls to death.

Ye sons of God, oppose his rage,
Resist, and he'll be gone;
Thus did our dearest Lord engage
And vanquish him alone.

Now he appears almost divine
Like innocence and love;
But the old serpent lurks within,
When he assumes the dove.
Fly from the false deceiver's tongue,
Ye sons of Adam, fly;
Our parents found the snare too strong,
Nor should the children try.

4 Sept.

(247)

Repent ye (O change your minds) and believe the gospel, Mark i. 15:
O the great comfort, that God requires only faith, and such a faith which is his own gift, and is held forth truly to every one that will receive his pardon, grace and love. But that this may not be understood of presumptuous notions in our heads, it is well to be observed, that true repentance goes before faith, by which the heart is not only convinced of sin, and filled with godly sorrow, but changed so as to hate and abandon all sins. It is not enough to leave off some of our sins, or be outwardly reformed; but it must be an inward and thorough change of the whole mind; for if one sin be reigning, we cannot be said to have repented, and received that faith and power of God which overcomes the world and sin.

Life and immortal joys are giv'n
To souls that mourn the sins they've done;
Children of wrath made heirs of heav'n,
By faith in God's eternal Son.
Wo to the wretch that never felt
The inward pangs of pious grief;

But adds to all his crying guilt
The stubborn sin of unbelief.
The law condemns the rebel dead,
Under the wrath of God he lies:
He seals the curse on his own head,
And with a double vengeance dies.

Q 4

5 Sept.

(248)

*R*estore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit, Psal. li. 12. Divine answer. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you. Then shall ye suck, ye shall be born upon her sides, and your heart shall rejoice, Isa. lxvi. 13, 14. For my words do good to him that walks uprightly, Micah. ii. 7.

Comfort belongs to such as really pant after it, and God is more desirous they should confidently rely upon his salvation in all things, suck the comforts of his promises, and be strong, than a tender mother can be desirous that her child should suck her full breasts. And where else should strength come from?

O sinners, come and taste his love;
Come, learn his pleasant ways,
And let your own experience prove
The sweetness of his grace.

Go tell him all your secret grief,*
Your groanings reach his ears;

He gives your inward pains relief,
And calms your greatest fears.

O love the Lord ye saints of his,
His eye regards the just;
How richly blest their portion is
Who make the Lord their trust.

* A christian sometimes must open and pour out his heart in secret before the Lord alone, for fear of hurting himself and others. This liberty must be allowed. Too close unitings often cause distress, hypocrisy and divisions.

6 Sept.

(249)

NOW also, when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not, Psal. lxxi. 18. O keep my soul and deliver me: let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in thee. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me: for I wait on thee, Psal. xxv. 20. 21. Divine answer. Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are born by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb. And even to your old age I am he, and even to your hoary hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear, even I will carry, and will deliver you, Isa. xlvii. 3, 4. For the Lord is full of compassion and mercy, long-suffering, and very pitiful, and forgiveth sins, and saveth in time of affliction, Sirach. ii. 11, &c.

God never does nor can forsake me, since I am as near and as closely united to him as a child which is carried in the mother's womb. O great comfort! what can I have to fear? may I not expect every thing now confidently from him? yes, and this is what pleases him above all things. Therefore I will be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving make my request known unto him, Phil. iv 6. always trusting that he will as certainly carry me through all difficulties to come, as he has done hitherto, that I can even give him thanks for it beforehand. O Lord, grant that I may practise this better still.

My God, my everlasting hope,
I live upon thy truth;
Thine hands have held my childhood up,
And strengthen'd all my youth.

Still has my life new wonders seen
Repeated ev'ry year;
Behold my days that yet remain
I trust them to thy care.

7 Sept.

(250)

TRUST ye not in lying words, saying, *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these, but thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, &c.* Jerem. vii. 4, 5. Of true prayer and worship in Spirit and in truth, see also John iv. 24. Rom. xiii. 1. James i. 27.

As a contrite heart is the most pleasing temple of God ; so speaking with God, in words of our own, as a child does with his father, is the best book of prayer. The most cunning method, by which satan deceives many now, is, the mistaking of an extensive knowledge and assurance of their own making for true faith ; or trusting on some outward forms of worship, sensible motives or communion with others, and pretending too soon to evangelical experiences, liberties and building of souls up ; tho' there was never a true change wrought in their own hearts. For what can all our reading, prayers, going to church and sacrament profit us without this ? Before all this shall be acceptable to the Lord, we must be renewed in our minds, and prove by our own works and deeds that we are the living temples of God.

It is not towers of stone or wood,
Pillars, nor paintings, please our God ;
Of living stones his church is built,
It was for souls Christ's blood was spilt.

It is not any splendid house,
That Jesus calls his married spouse ;
Believers, oh amazing love !
'Tis you, the Lord, your husband prove.

8 Sept.

(251)

*F*orsake me not, O Lord, O my God, be not far from me. Divine answer. The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that has mercy on thee. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests and not comforted, behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones, Isa. liv. 10—15.

Such as have never been destitute of comfort, do not relish this word. O Lord, as thou hast once quickened me by it in great distress, I will henceforth evermore take hold of it, and firmly believe, even without feeling, that thou wilt perform every thing punctually. Thou being my God in covenant, wilt never forsake me, but order all things for my good, adorn and carry me through, tho' all tempests should fall upon me, and every thing be dashed to pieces. This thy faithfulness requires.

Firm are the words which prophets give,
Sweet words on which believers live;
Each of them is the voice of God,
Who spoke and spread the skies abroad.
Oh! for a strong, a lasting faith,
To credit what th' almighty saith!

T' embrace the message of his Son,
And call the joys of heav'n our own.
Then should the earth's old pillars shake,
And all the wheels of nature break;
Our steady souls should fear no more
Than solid rocks when billows roar.

9 Sept.

(252)

LEAN not unto thine own understanding, Prov. iii. 5 *Be not wise in your own conceits, Rom. xii. 17, Put your neck under the yoke, and let your soul receive instruction; she is hard at hand to find Behold with your eyes, how that I have had but little labour, and have gotten unto me much rest, Sirach xli. 26. 27. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, 1 Cor. iii. 19.*

Whosoever will do the will of the Lord, and is not wise in his own conceit, avoiding vain curiosity and praying earnestly, shall certainly know the counsels and will of God, *John viii. 17.* But he must depend more upon the word of God, than his own feeling; since our own spirit often mixes with spiritual sensations, and tempts us to lusts, fear, presumption and pride: and many trust even to their scandalous whims and fancies, as if all were from our Saviour. O Lord grant, that I may be always jealous over myself, go in and out with prayer, and not err in any thing to the hurt of my soul.

Thus saith the wisdom of the Lord,
Bless'd is the man that hears my word;
Keeps daily watch before my gates,
And at my feet for mercy waits.
The soul that seeks me shall obtain
Immortal wealth and heav'nly gain;

Immortal life is his reward,
Life and the favour of the Lord.
But the vile wretch that flies from me,
Doth his own soul an injury;
Fools that against my grace rebel
Seek death, and love the road to hell.

10 Sept.

(253)

AND the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them Light: to go by day and night, &c. consequently he never left them, Exod. xiii. 21. And the pillar of the cloud went from before their face and stood behind them; and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel: which prevented the meeting of them, And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left. Chap. xiv. 19, 22. And all the Israelites passed clean over Jordan, Josh. iii. 17. Therefore we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, Rom. viii. 28.

We want daily some sort or other of affliction and burden, to serve us as rails and walls against the carnal wandrings of our hearts. Therefore when we meet with distress we must think, it is the wall or burden for the day to keep from swerving and falling into the snares of the enemy.

There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign;
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.

But timorous mortals start and shrink,
To cross this narrow sea;

And linger, shiv'ring on the brink,
And fear to launch away.

Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landskip o'er,
Nor Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,
Should fright us from the shore.

11 Sept.

(254)

AND it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses's hands were heavy, &c. Exod. xvii. 11. 12. And he, the King of Israel, shot. And he, Elisha, said: The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria, &c. And he, the King, smote thrice and stayed. And the man of God was wroth with him and said, thou shouldest have smitten five or six times, then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it, &c. 2 Kings xiii. 17—19.

The more prayer, the more victory. Every groan is a stroke and a sling-stone on the head of the old man. Tho' he should appear as a Goliath, he must die but by degrees. May the Lord make me instant in prayer, and give a true desire for his word.

Praise waits in Sion, Lord, for thee ;

There shall our vows be paid :

Thou hast an ear when sinners pray,

All flesh shall seek thine aid.

Lord, our iniquities prevail,

But pard'ning grace is thine,

And thou wilt grant us power and skill

To conquer every sin.

O free the souls condemn'd to death,

And when thy saints complain,

Let not be said, that praying breath

Was ever spent in vain.

12 Sept.

(255)

AND Jesus bowed his head, and gave up the ghost, John xix. 30.

To lay evermore hold on Christ crucified, and rest continually upon his meritorious death with a true faith, is the one thing needful of a christian, which is the sum and substance, nay the very marrow of the old and new testament, and above all things gives the greatest strength.

Alas! and did my Saviour bleed?

And did my sov'reign die?

Would he devote that sacred head

For such a worm as I?

Was it for crimes that I had done,

He groan'd upon the tree?

Amazing pity! grace unknown!

And love beyond degree.

Well might the sun in darkness hide,

And shut his glories in,

When God the mighty maker dy'd

For man the creature's sin.

Thus might I hide my blushing face,

While his dear cross appears;

Diffolve my heart in thankfulness,

And melt my eyes to tears.

But drops of grief can ne'er repay

The debt of love I owe;

Here, Lord, I give myself away,

'Tis all that I can do.

13 Sept.

(256)

OUR Father who art in heaven, Matth. vi. 9. Divine answer. *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty,* 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.

To apply the gospel in general without distinction, as if all were children of God, nay in a state of temptation, does exceeding great harm; St. Paul acts otherwise here. The heart must first be broke and discharged from the comfort of the world. Christ comes only to comfort, namely, all mourners; consequently every one must mourn first, tho' not in the same degree, and to make amends, but so much that he may be really humbled, sufficiently desirous and prepared to receive the comfort. To experience the gospel requires time. Many pretend now too soon to an evangelical state, insisting upon assurance and boldness which they have not themselves.

Jehovah reigns, his throne is high,
His robes are light and majesty;
His glory shines with beams so bright,
No mortal can sustain the sight.
His terrors keep the world in awe;
His justice guards his holy law;

His love reveals a smiling face;
His truth and promise seal the grace.
And will this glorious Lord descend
To be my father and my friend?
Then let my songs with angels join;
Heav'n is secure if God be mine,

14 Sept.

(257)

G I V E us this day our daily bread, Matth. vi. 2. Divine answer. *Seek ye the first kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you, ver 33.*

By this fourth petition of the Lord's prayer my daily bread is well secured. Is this what I live upon to day? and suppose I had nothing for to morrow, yet, praying the same to-morrow, I have it again, and so on every day, if it is only done in faith. The want of faith on divine providence, which is the first article of our creed, is generally much complained of; but very few are sensible of the want of faith in Christ, as to the second article, and this is most wanted; there sometimes being hardly one in a hundred, who has a true living faith in Christ.

God reigns on high, but not confines
His goodness to the skies;
Thro' the whole earth his bounty shines,
And ev'ry want supplies.

With longing eyes the creatures wait
On thee for daily food;
Thy lib'ral hand provides their meat,
And fills their mouths with good.

How kind are thy compassions, Lord!
How slow thine anger moves!
But soon he sends his pard'ning word
To cheer the souls he loves.

Creatures with all their endless race
Thy pow'r and praise proclaim;
But saints that taste thy richer grace,
Delight to bless thy name.

R

15 Sept.

(258)

*O*UR conversation, or our citizenship, is in heaven, Phil. iii. 20. therefore rejoice, because your names are written in heaven, Luke x. 20. And set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. Col. iii. 2.

A christian being only a traveller through this world having as it were a night's-lodging in it, does not desire to have every thing so convenient, but since his journey's end and city is in heaven, all his actions, sufferings, prayers, trade and conversation turn that way. O Lord, grant that mine eyes may be always fixed upon this mark so as to regulate all my designs and doings accordingly, asking myself in every thing: whether it be fit for heaven, and agreeable to the mind and manners of the celestial citizens and bridegroom above?

Raise thee, my soul, fly up and run
Thro' ev'ry heav'nly street;
And say, there's nought below the sun
That's worthy of thy feet.

Thus will we mount on sacred wings,
And tread the courts above:
Nor earth, nor all her mightiest things,
Shall tempt our meanest love.

The glorious tenants of the place
Stand bending round the throne;
And saints and seraphs sing and praise
The infinite Three-one.

Jesus, and when shall that dear day,
That joyful hour appear,
When I shall leave this house of clay,
To dwell amongst them there?

16 Sept.

(259)

TO Him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believes in him, shall receive remission of sins, Acts x. 43. chap. iv 12. This name is as ointment poured forth, the fulness of all grace, Cantic. i. 3. It is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe, Prov. xviii. 10.

In this name we shall draw nigh to the Father in prayer, and not come before him with a strange fire of our own worthiness or devotion, and he will draw nigh to us again, Jam. iv. 8. He will certainly grant our petitions, 'and we shall receive, that our joy may be full,' John xvi. 24. 'For the Lord is good and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon him,' Psal. lxxxvi. 5. and all these promises are yea and amen in Christ, that every one can say, 'the Lord will receive my prayer,' Psal. vi. 9. 'Blessed be God who has not turned away my prayer nor his mercy from me;' for he has dealt bountifully with me, Psal. lxvi. 20. xiii. 6.

Lift up your eyes to th' heav'nly seat

Where your Redeemer stays:

Kind intercessor there he sits,

And loves, and pleads, and prays:

Petitions now, and praise may rise,

And saints, their off'ings bring,

The priest with his own sacrifice

Presents them to the king.

Jesus alone shall bear my cries

Up to the Father's throne:

He, dearest Lord! perfumes my sighs,

And sweetens ev'ry groan.

R 2

17 Sept.

(260)

*I*N thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right-hand there are pleasures for evermore, Psal. xvi. 11. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, ascending out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, Rev. xxi. 2, 3, 4, 10, 12.

O my dear Saviour, being still so very imperfect and little prepared for heaven, grant that I may be more adorned with faith and love, with a heavenly mind and spiritual desires. And since thou knowest what I am wanting and hast justified and clothed me already with thy own garment and blood, and hast brought so many sons to glory, I trust, that thou wilt also inwardly adorn, perfect, and fetch me home in due time.

Oh, the delights, the heav'nly joys,
The glories of the place,
Where Jesus sends the brightest beams
Of his o'erflowing grace!

Archangels sound his lofty praise
Thro' ev'ry heav'nly street,
And lay their highest honours down
Submissive to his feet.

Lord, how our souls are all on fire
To see thy blest'd abode;
Our tongues rejoice in tunes of praise
To our incarnate God.

And while our faith enjoys this sight,
We long to leave our clay;
And wish thy fiery chariots, Lord,
To fetch our souls away.

18 Sept.

(261)

WATCH and pray: let us be going, Matth. xxvi. 41, 46. Remember Lot's wife, Luke xvii. 32. This is the way, walk ye in it, when you turn to the right hand, and when you turn to the left, Isa. xxx. 21.

To keep free from self-righteousness and false joy and liberty, is the safest way. O my dear Saviour, thou art my way, I walk in thy name, I live in faith, I look upon thee, I cleave to thee, I abide in thee and my constant saying is: I am justified, clean and free by thee, not to live licentiously, but to be kept from it. For if I was not to rest in thee, I should rest in the flesh: but being taken up with thee, all other things must vanish away, and I am able to be watchful, close and fervent.

When my forgetful soul renews
The favour of thy grace;
My heart presumes I cannot lose
The relish all my days.
But 'ere some fleeting hour is pass'd
The flatt'ring world employs,
Some sensual bait to seize my taste,
And to pollute my joys.

Then I repent and vex my soul,
That I should leave thee so;
Where will those wild affections roll,
That let a Saviour go?
Shew my forgetful feet the way
That lead to joys on high;
There knowledge grows without decay,
And love shall never die.

R 3

19 Sept.

(262)

WALK before me, as in my presence, and be thou perfect, Gen. xvii. 1. Fear God and keep his commandments, all, not one excepted, for this is the whole duty of all men. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, Ecclesiastes xii. 13, 14.

Consequently all such things as are now called indifferent in their nature, will also be arraigned and not judged indifferent, but either actually good or actually evil. O! the prodigious harm that is done by this false doctrine of innocent things? It opens the door to innumerable sins. For tho' our conscience often tells us, that we should not do such things, as are not actually good; yet presently the innocence is pleaded, it is called a harmless thing; which tho' it could not be said to be good, yet it was not evil neither, but quite indifferent in its nature; thousands are drawn into the snares of the devil. O Lord, grant that all my works be done unto thee, and in thy presence, agreeable to thy commandments, that even my leaves may not wither, and whatsoever I do may prosper and abide for ever.

Within thy circling pow'r I stand;
On ev'ry side I find thy hand;
Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,
I am surrounded still with God.

O may these thoughts possess my breast,
Where-e'er I rove, where-e'er I rest,
Nor, let my weaker passions dare
Consent to sin, for God is there.

20 Sept.

(263)

VERILY, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God, John iii. 3.

Consequently no outward form of religion will do ; but we must be spiritually born by the spirit of God, and have our hearts changed, else we cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Christ confirmed it twice with an oath. How is it possible then, that mere honest and moral men can be saved ? will Christ break his double oath ? no, surely. Therefore outward gross immoralities being only blamed and rebuked, moral christians always slip through ; and the looser sort think that they can leave off their open sins one time or another, and so none is duly concerned to be thoroughly converted ; but the new birth and a real change of the heart being insisted upon, and Christ held forth in this only true way, every one, who will, can be turned.

The second Adam shall restore
The ruins of the first ;
Hosanna to that sov'reign pow'r,
That new creates our dust.
When from the curse he sets us free
He makes our natures clean,

R 4

Nor would our Saviour come to be
The minister of sin.
His spirit purifies our frame,
And seals our peace with God ;
Jesus and his salvation came
By water and by blood.

21 Sept.

(264)

WHY art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me! hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God, Psal. xlii. 2. ver. 5, 6. For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us, Rom. viii. 18.

This shows that even believers are still in disquietness, but they conquer it by faith and hope to the end. If the Lord had said, that they should strive, pray and hope, till such and such a time, and his help should fail, then they might despair: but as he fixes no certain time, but without limitation, requires them to hope; this keeps them from impatience and despair; should he even tarry to the end, they will certainly experience him then, if no sooner to be faithful in his promises. O Lord, suffer not the load to lie too long and too heavy upon me, that I may not be unfaithful: I trust thou wilt in due time prove thyself to be my help, and thy word to be true.

'Tis God that lifts our comforts high,
Or sinks them in the grave,
He gives (and blessed be his name!)
He takes but what he gave.
Peace, all our angry passions then,
Let each rebellious sigh,

Be silent at his sov'reign will,
And ev'ry murmur die.
If smiling mercy crown our lives,
Its praises shall be spread;
And we'll adore the justice too,
That strikes our comforts dead.

22 Sept.

(265)

FAINT not to be strong in the Lord; that he may confirm you, cleave unto him: for the Lord Almighty is God alone, and besides him there, is no other Saviour. He filleth all things with his wisdom. Sirach xxiv. 24, 25.

O my dear Saviour, grant that I may rest quietly and humbly, in thee avoiding all swerving presumptions and actions which are not commended to me. He that always covets novelties, it is a sign that he has not as yet tasted the power of the old word of God; else he would certainly be satisfied with it. Better daily to improve in the power of godliness than in new words, forms and methods. To be talking always of wounds is not an apostolical method. 'May the Lord quicken me by the old truths, and humble my heart evermore, so as to receive them better, and to abide in that which I have heard from the beginning!' Novelty is the bane of souls, by which we are often grievously tormented and distracted. It is work enough for a meek and quiet soul to keep within the bounds of a settled mind, and effectually to center in God. How is it possible for such as from a vain curiosity desire to know every thing, to enjoy true rest? what have we to do with the world? what need to meddle with the business of others? what signifies all knowledge, if it does not profit our souls? had we not better to be ignorant of some other things, than to want a saving knowledge of Christ?

O that the Lord would guide my ways
To keep his statutes still:
O that my God would grant me grace
To know and do his will.

My soul has gone too far astray,
My feet too often slip;
Yet since I've not forgot thy way,
Restore thy wandering sheep.

23 Sept.

(266)

W A S H me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.
Psal. li. 2. Divine answer. *The blood of Jesus Christ the son of*
God cleanseth us from all sin, 1 John i. 6.

Under the ceremonial law all things were purged with blood, and without shedding of blood there was no remission; thus it is impossible, that any one sin, even the least sinful motion, should be taken away except by the blood of Christ Jesus. This teaches us the greatness of sin, keeps us humble, tender and watchful, and yet gives sufficient peace and strength at the same time.

My dying Saviour and my God,
Fountain for guilt and sin,
Sprinkle me ever with thy blood,
And cleanse, and keep me clean.

Wash me, and make me thus thy own:
Wash me, and mine thou art;
Wash me, but not my feet alone,
My hands, my head, my heart.

Th' atonement of thy blood apply,
Till faith to fight improve;
Till hope shall in fruition die,
And all my soul be love.
For ever here my rest shall be,
Close to thy bleeding side;
This all my hope, and all my plea,
For me the Saviour dy'd.

24 Sept.

(267)

*W*hatsoever thou takest in hand, remember the end, and thou shalt never do amiss, Sirach vii. 39.

O! how many trifles and vanities would be avoided, if it were but always duly considered, that we could die even this very day. O Lord! teach me the number of my days, and since I must and will be prepared and perfected against that decisive hour, suffer me not to desire, to speak, or to do, or so to leave any thing undone that may be matter of grief at last. How long I may still have to live. I know not, and being sensible that I am not so heavenly-minded yet, as I could wish; I beseech thee, to fashion me according to thine own pleasure, and preserve me every hour prepared in thee, that death may not overtake me in an unexpected time.

Hark! from the tombs a doleful sound,
My ears attend the cry;
Ye living men, come view the ground,
Where you must shortly lie.
Princes, this clay must be your bed,
In spite of all your towers;
The tall, the wise, the rev'rend head
Must lie as low as ours.

Great God! is this our certain doom?
And are we still secure!
Still walking downward to our tomb,
And yet prepare no more?
Grant us the pow'rs of quick'ning grace,
To fit our souls to fly;
Then, when we drop this dying flesh,
We'll rise above the sky.

25 Sept.

(268)

WHAT lack I yet? Matth. xix. 20. Yet lackest thou one thing, Luke xviii, 22. For, *one thing is needful*, Luke x. 42.

This one thing needful is to have Christ, and by being first, with Mary, served and treated by him, we draw the necessary strength from him, to serve him again. He must be first our meat, before we can feed on him, or do any thing for him. Faith receives grace first from the fulness of Christ, and being thus strengthened, begins to give and work also, tho' it were but faintly. However it is not by our working and giving, but by the receiving in faith, that we become christians, and remain in a perfect state of salvation: since we receive, even with the feeble hands of faith, a whole and perfect Christ. This *one thing* is needful.

I'll hear of nothing else beside
My Jesu, and him crucify'd;
In him is all I want:
His blood his meritorious blood,
Alone is rich, alone is good,
For that alone I pant.

Sure none refuse to join this song,
To praise our Saviour all along
Their pilgrimage below;
To sing, ' There's none, there's none beside,
' But Jesu, and him crucify'd
' Needful for us to know.'

26 Sept.

(269)

WHAT I say unto you. I say, unto all, watch, Mark xiii. 37. But, awake first to righteousness, 1 Cor. xv. 34.

Even believers are still tempted with heaviness and drowsiness in prayer : but it is their great cross and burden. O Lord Jesus grant, that, mine eyes being continually fixed upon thee and upon myself, I may always have grace not only to believe myself clean and justified in thee, but also to keep up my zeal and watchfulness.

O thou, who all things canst control,
Chase the dead slumber from my soul ;
With joy and fear, with love and awe
Give me to keep thy perfect law.

O may one beam of thy blest light
Pierce thro', dispel the shades of night :
Touch my cold breast with heav'nly fire,
With holy, conquering zeal inspire.

With out-stretch'd hands, and streaming eyes
Oft I begin to grasp the prize ;
I groan, I strive, I watch, I pray :
But ah ! how soon it dies away !

The deadly slumber soon I feel
Afresh upon my spirit steal :
Rise, Lord ! stir up thy quick'ning pow'r,
And wake me that I sleep no more.

27 Sept.

(270)

WHAT things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ, yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, as my righteousness, Phil. iii. 7—9.

This was the life and constant mind of St. Paul. The words; ' In him, in Christ, in the Lord, I am in Christ, &c.' occur continually. I chose it for my motto also. It shall be my great tower, my strong fortress, my sweet paradise, mine only element and life. Here I will take up my abode for ever. It is good for us to be here; here let us make tabernacles. Here death shall find me at last.

Had I ten thousand gifts beside,
I'd cleave to Jesu crucify'd,
And build on him alone:
For no foundation is there giv'n
On which I'd place my hopes of heav'n;
But Christ the corner-stone.

Possessing Christ I all profess;
Wisdom and strength and righteousness,
And sanctity complete:
Bold in his name, I dare draw nigh
Before the ruler of the sky,
And all his justice meet.

28 Sept.

(271)

WHAT must I do to be saved? Divine answer. Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house, Acts xvi. 31.

Faith is not a confidence of our own making, but it is God that works it in a contrite and repenting heart. This faith, as *Luther* in his preface to the Epistle to the *Romans* observes, purifies the heart, destroys the old Adam, overcomes the world, engenders us anew, and changes us in heart, mind, and all the powers and faculties of the soul; which is the true protestant faith, and not that we only think and say, I believe. By this we must try our faith. All true believers have received it under a sense of holy contrition, sorrow, and terrors. If we feel something of this, and apply to Christ by prayer, for faith and grace, we have a sure mark of faith already; for if we did not believe, we would not pray. And he that daily cleanses himself in the blood of Christ, has true faith and hope already, tho' he is but weak and does not taste any joy.

Ye dying souls that sit
In darkness and distress,
Look from the borders of the pit
To Christ's recovering grace.
Sinners shall hear his sound;
Their thankful tongues shall own,

Their righteousness and strength is found
In Christ, the Lord, alone.
In him shall Israel trust,
And see their guilt forgiv'n;
God will pronounce the sinners just,
And take the saints to heav'n.

29 Sept.

(272)

*W*O unto him, through whom offences come. What wo then must befall such immoral teachers, as give offence to youth? *take heed to yourselves; Luke xvii. 1—3. Abstain from all appearance of evil, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, Phil. ii. 15.*

Lord! I desire also to shine in good works and fruits of faith, but thou art more desirous to give, than I am to receive it; for it tends to thy own glory, and thou lovest the growing of my graces more than I. Therefore I will give myself up to thee, for to purge, cleanse, and make me fruitful.

O Lord! my stubborn will subdue,
Create my ruin'd frame anew;
Dispel my darkness by thy light:
Into all truth my spirit guide,
But from mine eyes for ever hide
All things displeasing in thy sight.

Be heaven now my soul's abode,
Hid be my life with Christ in God,
My spirit, Lord, be one with thine;
Let all my works in thee be wrought,
And fill'd with thee, be all my thought,
'Till in me thy full likeness shine:

30 Sept.

(273)

AS Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that suffereth in the flesh has ceased from sin, 1 Pet. iv. 1.

By outward affliction the Lord very often mortifies our inward corruptions of the heart, and facilitates our victory. But nothing will bring us sooner to loathing of sin and destroying its power than a true consideration of Christ's suffering and dying for us: for his death on the cross produces true repentance, by which the heart is broken and yet comforted; and, without a broken heart, all the boasting of Christ's cross, blood and wounds, are nothing but a vain babbling, and the play-work of our fancies.

Father, I bless thy gentle hand;
How kind was thy chastising rod,
That forc'd my conscience to a stand,
And brought my wandering soul to God!
Foolish and vain I went astray
'Ere I had felt thy scourges, Lord;
I lost my guide and lost my way;
But now I love and keep thy word.

'Tis good for me to wear the yoke,
For sin is apt to rise and swell;
'Tis good to bear my Father's stroke,
That I might learn his statutes well.
Thy hands have made my mortal frame,
Thy spirit form'd my soul within;
Teach me to know thy wondrous name,
And guard me safe from death and sin.

S

W E E P not: behold the lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, has prevailed. Rev. v. 5. He rose triumphantly and destroyed the works of the devil: therefore sin shall not have dominion over us, Rom vi. 14.

Many complain, that tho' they will not turn back, yet they have no power to advance further. If this is thy case, my reader, remember that the enemy of souls will discourage thee. Go on praying, and venture it evermore upon the Lord. Consider how he has awakened you at first, how often he has heard your prayers afterwards, and assisted you in many hard struggles. Surely he will help you now also! if that will not do, begin, as it were afresh, acknowledge yourself guilty in every respect, and, as the chief of sinners, plead for mercy and be instant in your humble supplications; looking at the same time upon yourselves as reconciled and pardoned in Christ, in spite of all your misery: then you will soon make a better progress. To despair of our own strength, is good; but we must never despair of the power of Christ, who is risen from the dead, but be sure to overcome with him at last. He will certainly help you in the due and best season.

Hell and thy sins resist thy course,
But hell and sin are vanquish'd foes;
Thy Jesus nail'd them to the cross.
And sing the triumph when he rose.

He dies, and in that dreadful night
Did all the pow'rs of hell destroy;
Rising he brought our heav'n to light,
And took possession of the joy.

WHOM the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? but he chasteneth us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness, Heb. xii. 6—10.

To these chastenings also belong outward afflictions, which are precious means and sanctified to believers. O my dear heavenly Father! thou art only pleased with a true filial confidence, but I am still of a distrustful heart when any thing comes upon me on a sudden. Grant that I may always entertain the best hopes of thee, fear no adversity, or look upon it as a sign of displeasure, but of love; really believing it to be intended as a blessing to my good. Whatever thy providence may order, let me only be convinced of thy paternal affection, and fall in with thy salutary designs.

So for my sin I justly feel
Thy discipline, O God;
Yet wait the gracious moment still,
Till thou remove thy rod.
For I have found, 'tis good for me
To bear my Father's rod;

Afflictions make me learn thy law,
And live upon my God.

This is the comfort I enjoy
When new distress begins;
I read thy word, I run thy way,
And hate my former sins.

THE entrance of thy word gives light: It giveth understanding to the simple, Psal. cxix. 130. Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me, ver. 33.

We may have a clear sight and a real taste of the gospe^l. and yet be soon deprived of it again, if we do not walk in godly simplicity and poverty in spirit, for Christ will have none but humble and child-like disciples. But thus abiding always in the word and in Christ, we will come to great and lasting assurance: for neither a sweet sense, nor even faith itself, but Christ alone, is the foundation of our salvation, whom the weakest as well as the strongest believer receives. And we must believe first, before we can feel. To trust only on feeling is not true faith, and does not last long.

Thy mercies fill the earth, O Lord;
How good thy works appear!
Open mine eyes to read thy word,
And see thy wonders there.

When once it enters to the mind
It spreads such light abroad,
The meanest souls instruction find,
And raise their thoughts to God.

'Tis like the sun, a heav'nly light,
That guides us all the day;
And through the dangers of the night
A lamp to lead our way.
Since I'm a stranger here below,
Let not thy path be hid,
But mark the road my feet should go,
And be my constant guide.

4 Oct.

(277)

THY Gentleness, Discipline, hath made me great, Psal. xviii. 35.

It is not so easy a thing, as may be imagined, to be kept humble. Great gifts require great afflictions, or other humbling disciplines. Without these we are in danger of being lifted up, especially if we slight the inward abominations of the heart, and will have the conquest of sin to be no more than the killing of a fly, as many vainly pretend in our days. Odd heroes those, and a poor victory indeed! what crown can they expect for it? those that extenuate and lessen sin, lessen the merits and power of Christ also.

Father, here to thee I cry,
Thee in Jesus' name conjure,
With my one request comply,
Make me humble, make me poor.
This of all thy gifts impart;
When I am of this posselt,
When thou giv'st a humble heart,
If thou canst, withhold the rest.

S 3

Wear my soul and keep it low,
Do not with thy gifts destroy,
Lowliness of heart bestow,
Give me this or take my joy:
If with me thou wilt not stay,
Let my comfort all depart,
Take my joy and peace away,
Leave me but an humble heart.

GIVE ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not thyself from my supplication, Psal. lv. 1. Christ's answer. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you, John xvi. 23. For the Father himself loveth you, ver. 27. He has promised: before they call, I will answer, and whilst they are speaking, I will hear, Isa. lxxv. 24. Therefore I say unto you, what things soever you desire when ye pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them, Mark xi. 24.*

He that converses much and is humbly confident with God in prayer shall certainly be heard: and these answers of prayer are undeniable evidences of the truth, faithfulness and love of God, and greatly strengthen his faith, and at last bring him to be intimately acquainted with him. The more we receive, the more we are enlightened to see how much there is still wanting. This stirs us up to more frequent prayer, and to desire evermore; and the more we desire and believe that we shall receive it, the more shall be granted. Unbelief receives nothing, *Mat. xiii. 58.* But faith opens all the treasures of God, and never goes away empty.

Because on me they set their love,
I'll save them, faith the Lord;
I'll bear their joyful souls above
Destruction and the sword.

My grace shall answer when they call;
In trouble I'll be nigh:
My pow'r shall help them when they fall,
And raise them when they die.

IF I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ, Gal. i 10.
 Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification,
 Rom. xv. 2. Fear or love of men and hypocrisy very often are nearly
 allied: *A man that flattereth his neighbour, spreadeth a net for his feet,*
 Prov. xxix. 5. *But he that rebukes a man afterwards shall find more*
favour, than he that flattereth with the tongue, chap. xxviii. 23.

We are ever inclined to extremes, even then when God has begun his work in our soul. At one time we are apt to run into a false activity for the conversion of others; trusting too much on our own sufficiency and strength; at other times perhaps we fall into too much remissness and inactivity for the salvation of others. May the Lord therefore always guide me to steer the middle course, so as to walk in all singleness and humility of heart; as well in true fervency of spirit, faith and love, that it may be said; I believe, therefore do I speak. Grant, O my dear Saviour, that I may shine as a light and be useful to all about me, never seeking MY OWN, but only the salvation and good of others with unfeigned love, O that thy love may constrain me in all things! Amen.

My own glory still I seek,
 Still I cover human praise;
 Still in all I do, or speak;
 Thee I wrong, and rob thy grace:
 And must that which is so good
 Evil prove to sinful me?

Poison shall I draw from food,
 Sin from grace, and pride from thee?
 O forbid it, humble love!
 Hide me, O my Father, hide,
 Far away this snare remove,
 Save me from the sin of pride.

7 Oct.

(280)

Whoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, 1 John iii. 9. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. 1 John v. 3. But how can that be possible, are we not weak men? answer. Would God require it from us if it was impossible? is it not farther said? And his commandments are not grievous. Now if they are grievous to you, you are not born anew, consequently not in faith, and therefore not strong in the Lord, Eph. vi. 10. For whatsoever is born of God, overcomes the world, and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith, 1 John v. 3, 4.

Therefore pray earnestly to God for faith, read diligently the word of God, avoid every sin, and shun the occasions of it, and all that may be a hindrance of what is good. If you meet with difficulties, faint not, but be instant, and pray not only mornings and evenings out of your prayer-book, but fall down also upon your knees at other times of the day, and pray with your own words from the heart. And tho' you should not find directly the desired effect, you must not give over, but go on and try again and again. By this method, you will succeed, and by none else, this is carefully to be observed. O Lord! having prayed for nothing more than for faith, all the days of my life; I trust thou wilt not only grant, but keep it also to the end, and carry me through all difficulties. Amen.

Till thou anew my soul create,
Still may I strive, and watch, and pray,

Humbly and confidently wait,
And long to see thy perfect day,

*HE that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved, Matth. xxiv.
13. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no
man take thy crown, Rev. iii. 11. Wherefore let him that thinketh he
standeth, take heed lest he fall, 1 Cor. x. 12.*

He that stands in faith, and by nature is of a chearful temper, must not magnify the measure of his own faith, and undervalue that of weaker souls, for fear of falling away. He who knows the nature and power of temptations, will not discourage the weak, nor insist too much upon particular enjoyments and sensible assurance, which are not the constant witness and marks of faith. The holy Spirit himself is the earnest and seal of adoption, who is to be known not only by this joy, but by all his other fruits and operations. To trust too much upon feeling, disturbs our peace, as soon as it is gone; but to rely on the word of God preserves a settled assurance.

Jesu, shall I never be
Firmly grounded upon thee?
Strong in faith I seem this hour,
Stript the next of all my pow'r.
Plant and root and fix in me
All the mind that was in thee:

Settled peace I then shall find
When I am renew'd in mind.
Grant that ev'ry moment I
May believe and feel thee nigh,
Stedfastly behold thy face,
'Stablish'd with abiding grace.

IF any man have not the spirit of Christ (but the spirit of this world) he is none of his, Rom. viii. 9. See also ver, 7, 8, 14.

For not only gross wickedness, but even a carnal mind and the friendship of this world, is enmity against God, *Phil. iii. 18, 19. Jam. iv. 4.* But how do I know, that I have the spirit of Christ? answer. I have prayed for him earnestly; this cannot be in vain, *Luke xi. 13.* He works also hatred and sorrow of sin, rebukes, comforts, and drives me to Christ, and to prayers. This is his abiding witness, built upon the word of God, which no man of this world, but even the weakest believer, can have.

Holy, and true, and righteous Lord,
I wait to prove thy perfect will,
Be mindful of thy gracious word,
And stamp me with thy spirit's seal.
The hatred of the carnal mind
Out of my flesh at once remove;
Give me a tender heart, resign'd
And pure, and full of faith and love.

Within me thy good spirit place;
Spirit of health, and love, and pow'r
Plant in me thy victorious grace,
And sin shall never enter more.
Purge me from ev'ry sinful blot,
My idols all be cast aside;
Cleanse me from ev'ry evil thought,
From all the filth of self and pride.

Whoever bath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance
 Matth. xiii. 12. For, *the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life,* John iv. 14.

Of the remarkable increase of the kingdom of God, even from the least beginning, see also *Matth. xiii. 31—33.* and that beautiful figure *Ezek. xlvii 1—12.* This well therefore being once opened to you, it is highly necessary to draw evermore the living water out of it by prayers, since it runs freely then. But if you begin to be slothful and distracted, not abiding closely in Christ, by true watchfulness, as in the presence of God, your spirit will be soon dried up; that afterwards, you will hardly be ab'e with the most anxious groans, to draw as it were one single drop out of the deep of this fountain. O Lord! grant that I may uninterruptedly remain in thee and in thy presence, and a'ways live in thy communion, as the fish in the water.

Glory to God that walks the sky,
 And sends his blessing thro':
 That tells his saints of joys on high,
 And gives a taste below.

Chearful I feast on heav'nly fruit,
 And drink the pleasures down,
 Pleasures that flow hard by the foot
 Of the eternal throne.

But ah! how soon my joys decay,
 How soon my sins arise,
 And snatch'd th' heav'nly scene away
 From these lamenting eyes!
 When shall the time, dear Jesus, when
 The shining day appear,
 That I shall leave those clouds of sin,
 And guilt and darkness here?

WHO is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high? who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth? he raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dung-hill, Psal. cxiii. 5, 6, 7. He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts (tho' outwardly they seem to be humble): He hath put down the mighty from their seats (as he did to him that said: Is not this great Babylon?) and exalted them of low degree, Luke i. 54. Therefore seek meekness, humbleness, Zeph. ii. 3.

All things in heaven, even the highest angels, being so exceedingly humble before the majesty of God, Isa. vi. how much more shall we be laid low upon earth, who still have so much sin? even the most righteous have still some hidden corruption left in their hearts, which appears to them more and more as they grow in grace. For tho' we should not feel it always, we must not imagine that there is none; it lies concealed only; and is so much more dangerous, as perhaps it may be a beginning of presumption and backsliding. Therefore take care and be not proud. For such as pretend to have done with sin, are not of the right spirit.

Lo' at his feet with awful fear
Th' adorning armies fall:
With joy they shrink to nothing there,
Before th' eternal ALL.
There I would vie with all the host,
In duty and in bliss;

While less than nothing I could boast.
And vanity confess.
The more thy glories strike mine eyes,
The humbler I shall lie;
Thus while I sink, my joys shall rise
Unmeasurably high.

THROUGH (vain) *desire a man having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom, Prov. xviii. 1. But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, &c. Gal. v. 22, 23.*

Bawling, judging and reviling does not become a christian. The Lord was not in the strong wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in a still small voice, 1 Kings xix. 11, 12. He that takes offence at every thing is still blind; and who can bear nothing, is but very weak. Such should remember that it is said: 'Destroy it not,' &c. *Isa. lxv. 8.* Not only the grosser sort of divisions, but also such well-meaning particular separations and alterations, as are imprudently made at improper times and places, do a great deal of harm and disturb the general harmony and mutual confidence of christian brethren. For some religious exercises are good in themselves, but brotherly love and harmony is better still. The true spirit of God is no sectarian, makes no divisions, is far from boasting, and uses no arts and cunning tricks. Thus you may try the spirits.

Lo' what an entertaining sight
Are brethren that agree,
Brethren whose chearful hearts unite
In bands of piety!

When streams of love from Christ the spring
Descend to ev'ry soul,
And heav'nly peace, with balmy wing,
Shades and bedews the whole.

HE that has pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he has given, will he pay him again, Prov. xix. 17. See also Acts iv. 32—35. 2 Cor. ix. 6—15. 1 Tim. vi. 6, 10—19.

Who would not willingly give charity? faith always expects and receives something for that purpose from the treasure of God, who is rich enough, when we have nothing. God bestows his gifts upon us, and gives also the heart to bestow them again upon others, consequently he rewards his own gifts, which passed only through our hands, and crowns his own works. Note 1 *Chron.* xxix. 14. 16.

Blest is the man whose bowels move,
And melt with pity to the poor,
Whose soul by sympathizing love
Feels what his fellow-saints endure.

His heart contrives for their relief
More good than his own hands can do;
He, in the time of gen'ral grief,
Shall find the Lord has bowels too,

His soul shall live secure on earth,
With secret blessings on his head,
When drougt, and pestilence, and dearth,
Around him multiply their dead.

Or if he languish on his couch,
God will pronounce his sins forgiv'n,
Will save him with a healing touch,
Or take his willing soul to heav'n,

Whoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven, Matth. xviii. 4. For every one that exalteth himself, shall be abased: and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted, Luke xviii 14.

If we had learned all things, yet we could never be said to have learned humility enough. For tho' we have once been thoroughly convinced, that we deserve to be damned, nay the chief of sinners, yet are we still in danger to be puffed up. An humble mind does not know itself, he that believes himself to be humble enough, is very far from really being so. O my dear Saviour! give me thy humble mind, to be willingly little and humble, so as never to delight in honour; since it does not belong to me.

Shew me, Father, what I am,
Shew me, what in Christ thou art,
All my glory, all my shame;
Give me, Lord, an humble heart.
Listen to my ceaseless cries,
Mean and little may I be,

Base and vile in my own eyes,
Griev'd at my own misery.
Shew, and then my sickness cure;
Make me know as I am known,
Wound my spirit, make me poor
Break, O break this heart of stone.

AS the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God, Psal. xlii. 2, 3. Divine answer. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that has no money; come ye buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Harken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness, Isa lv. 1, 2,

There is a great difference between a legal and a faint hearted soul; the former is puffed up with self righteousness, the latter humbly thirsts after Christ's righteousness, therefore he is not under the law, but has grace already. It is only the child, or the new man actually born, that can cry and thirst. And tho' he cannot so fully believe it, yet to have grace is one thing, and to feel and enjoy it, is another. Therefore let not the weak be confounded, which is done very easily, the enemy himself contributing to it, as much as he can; but let it be declared even to the weakest, that they are actually saved, as soon as they are earnestly panting and willing to receive all without price, *Matth. v. 3.*

Eternal wisdom has prepar'd
A soul-reviving feast,
And bids your longing appetites
The rich provisions taste.

Jesus, the God, invites us here
To this triumphal feast,

And brings immortal blessings down
For each redeemed guest.

O! glorious God, what can we pay
For favours so divine?

We would devote our hearts away,
To be for ever thine.

HOW long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily, Psal. xiii. 2. God's answer. Be careful for nothing : but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God, Phil. iv. 6. Commit thy way unto the Lord : trust also in him, and he shall sustain thee : he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved, Ps. lv. 22. For he has done wonderful things ; his counsels of old are faithfulness and truth, Isa. xxv. 1, 9.

This one word, ' be careful for nothing,' is a wall against a thousand troubles. But if we give room to any care and unbelief ; it is like a leaven that spreads through all our actions. Therefore we ought never to despair in our lawful calling, but rely in all things on the good of providence and faithfulness of God, firmly believing that he will never fail to carry us through the most difficult and intricate circumstances, tho' there should be ever so little appearance for it in our own eyes.

He that can dash whole worlds to death,
And make them when he please,
He speaks, and that almighty breath
Fulfills his great decrees.
His very word of grace is strong
As that which built the skies ;

The voice that rolls the stars along
Speaks all the promises.
He said : ' Let the wide heav'n be spread,'
And heav'n was stretch'd abroad ;
' Abrah'm, I'll be thy God,' he said,
And he was Abrah'm's God.

T

ALL our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told, Psal. xc. 9. But they counted our life a pastime, and our time here a market for gain: For, say they, we must be getting every way, though it be by evil means. All those things are passed away like a shadow, and as a post that hasteth by; and as a ship that passeth over the waves of the water, which when it is gone by, the trace thereof cannot be found, neither the path way of the keel in the waves, Wisdom xv. 12. chap. v. 9, 11.

The whole life of many people is nothing else but sporting, playing, dancing, and running for temporal things, as in a fair. God strikes and visits them with poverty, sickness and national judgments. But who knows and believes the power of his anger? consider, O man! the dreadful eternity and make haste to repent, that nothing worse may come upon thee. No wonder that even the children of God are chastised and deprived of their comfort, if they are distracted with many things. May the Lord keep me always closely united to himself, and make me wise and diligent in laying up something for eternity.

Are we not sons and heirs of God?
 Are we not bought with Jesus' blood?
 Do we not hope for heav'nly joys,
 And shall we stoop to trifling toys?
 Can laughter feed th' immortal mind?
 Where spirits of celestial kind
 Made for a jest, for sport and play,
 To wear out time and waste the day?

Lord, raise our hearts and passions higher;
 Touch our vain souls with sacred fire;
 Then with an elevated eye
 We'll pass these glitt'ring trifles by.
 We'll look on all the toys below
 With such disdain as angels do,
 And wait the call that bids us rise
 To promis'd mansions in the skies.

18 Oct.

(291)

*W*E must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God, Acts xiv. 22. Therefore, let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Heb. xii. 1. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin, ver. 4.

How is it possible for any man to deny the strivings against sin ? For (1) here we are plainly told. (2) What is spoke of the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, Gal. v. 17. is the very same. (3) The most experienced christians are witnesses to it. (4) The word of God is said to be a sword, our prayers a wrestling, and our faith the victory. Thus our whole race consists in strivings and conquests. There is always an enemy to be conquered first, before we can make a considerable progress in something that is good ; and none of our enemies is very easily to be overcome, but some are very stubborn. Therefore courage and patience are required ; and thus we may be sure to have the victory at last.

Subdue thy passions, O my soul,
Maintain the fight, thy work pursue,
Daily thy rising sins control,
And be thy vict'ries ever new.
The land of triumph lies on high,
There are no fields of battle there:

Lord, I would conquer till I die,
And finish all the glorious war.
Let ev'ry flying hour confess,
I gain thy gospel fresh renown ;
And when my life and labours cease,
T 2 May I possess the promis'd crown.

WE are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, Rom. iii. 24. 25.

How sweet are the words, ' by grace without merits ye are saved !' O an inexhaustible fountain of all comfort and divine strength ! O how little is the generality of vain and worldly people, who still feed upon husks, acquainted with these words ! how little are they relished by our self-righteous moral christians ! but O ! how deliciously does a poor hungry sinner fare upon them ! There is hardly any thing less known and understood as to the power and experience, than the mystery of Christ's suffering and dying for us, and justification by faith in him, tho' it is the only paradise and element of believers and the greatest jewel restored by the reformation. Such talking and representations as strike the imagination are not sufficient ; but we must also feel the mortal wounds of sin, by which the flesh is mortified, and be actually healed by the stripes of Christ.

God, the great God, that rules the skies,
The gracious and the just,
Makes his own Son a sacrifice ;
And here lies all our trust.
Here rest my faith and ne'er remove ;
Here let repentance rise

While I behold his bleeding love,
His dying agonies.
With shame and sorrow here I own
How great my guilt has been :
This is my way to approach the throne,
And God forgives my sin.

20 Oct.

(293)

WE know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, 2 Cor. v. 1. For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and tho' after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, &c. Job xix. 25, 26, 27.

The world calls him a wise man, who knows how to make ample provision and to lay up much for his household. But this is foolishness, since he does not know whether it will be a real blessing to his posterity, or not. He is wise indeed, that lays up treasures in heaven, and regulates all things, even his domestic affairs in such a manner, as to reap the benefit of them hereafter.

O happy soul that lives on high,
While men lie grov'ling here!
His hopes are fix'd above the sky,
And faith forbids his fear.
He cannot let his Saviour go
To hold his riches fast;
Or hunt for empty joys below,
And lose his heav'n at last.

His pleasures rise from things unseen,
Beyond this world and time;
Where neither eyes, nor ears have been,
Nor thoughts of mortals climb.
He looks to heav'n's eternal hills,
To meet that glorious day;
Dear Lord, how slow thy chariot-wheels
How long is thy delay!

T 3

WHERE shall I find rest? Answer. Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and you shall find rest for your souls, Jerem. vi. 16. See also Matth. xi. 28, 29.

In our own ways there is nothing but trouble. but giving ourselves intirely up to be guided of God at his own pleasure, we can always be easy, since we know, that by every step he brings us nearer to heaven. The only way to rest is the way of repentance and faith, in which we look always upon ourselves from the beginning to the end, not only as utterly lost and condemned, but also as perfectly reconciled and justified malefactors in Christ. Thus to abide in him, to let him work alone, and be truly resigned to his ways, will certainly have the desired effect, whilst by the righteousness and workings of our own hearts we can never attain to it, or, which is worse, be lulled into a false rest.

Lord, I believe a rest remains
To all thy people known;
A rest, where pure enjoyment reigns,
And thou art lov'd alone.
A rest, where all our souls desire
Is fixt on things above,

Where grief and pain and fear expire,
Cast out by perfect love.
O that I now this rest may know,
Believe, and enter in!
Now, Saviour, now the pow'r bestow,
And let me cease from sin.

*FROM whence can a man satisfy these men with bread, Mark viii. 4.
Divine answer. Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or
what ye shall drink: nor yet for your body what you shall put on. Yea, take
no thought for to morrow, (much less for many years) Matth. vi. 25, 34.
Casting all your care upon him, for he cares for you. 1 Pet. v. 7.*

The Lord never wants means and ways to help our necessities, tho' we do, and as long as we take the care upon ourselves and trust upon things foreseen, we cannot experience the paternal care and providence of God, and are without the least grain of faith. For relying upon God for bread, is the very least degree of faith, or, as *Luther* observes, the faith of little children; and if we cannot trust him with our bellies, how can we trust him with our souls and her spiritual and eternal concerns? Faith does every thing, he prays, works, suffers, justifies, sanctifies, and makes us victorious, content and free from anxious cares.

Commit thou all thy grief
And ways unto his hands;
To his sure truth and tender care
Who earth and heav'n commands,
Still heavy is thy heart?
Still sink thy spirits down?

T 4

Cast off the weight, let fear depart;
And ev'ry care be gone.
No profit canst thou gain
By self-consuming care;
To him command thy cause, his ear
Attends the softest pray'r.

Blessed are all they that put their trust in him, Ps. ii. 12. For, who-so-ever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed, Rom. x. 11. Blessed is the man, that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper, Ps. i. 1, 2.

O glorious promise! there can be nothing above the fear of God and the love of his word. Now, O Lord! since thou hast worked in me a good-will and a delight in thy word, which is a true mark of my new birth, and shews that I am no more under the law: grant that I may also understand and do thy will. And that the old man may be mortified and the new strengthened evermore, I desire to have this love of thy word daily increased in such a manner, as never to be fatiated with it.

Great God! mine eyes with pleasure look
On the dear volume of thy book;
There my Redeemer's face I see,
And read his name who dy'd for me.

Let the false raptures of the mind
Be lost and vanish'd in the wind:

Here I can fix my hope secure;
This is thy word, and must endure.

God's kindest thoughts are here express'd,
Able to make us wise and bless'd.
The doctrines are divinely true,
Fit for reproof and comfort too.

*If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed, John viii. 36.
Ye have been called unto liberty, on'y use not liberty for an occasion to
the flesh, Gal. v. 13. Rom. vi. 20—23.*

Such as use an unbounded liberty, to do what they p'ease, are the greatest slaves of their own passions, nay of satan himself. But such as omit only the gross and outward sins, are far from true repentance, and fall into self-righteousness. The greatest of all sins is the original-sin, which is always before the eyes of true converts, and becomes daily more abominable. This makes them groan and pray evermore : O Lord, pardon mine iniquity ; for it is great : and thus they abide in Christ continually, who gives true liberty, not to commit, but to overcome sin.

Shall we go on to sin,
Because thy grace abounds,
Or crucify the Lord again,
And open all his wounds ?
Forbid it, mighty God !
Nor let it e'er be said,

That we whose sins are crucify'd,
Should rise them from the dead,
We will be slaves no more
Since Christ has made us free,
Has nail'd our tyrants to his cross,
And bought our liberty.

W Hither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? Ps. cxxxix. 7. Answer. To Christ, who is my never-failing refuge and rest.

For tho' my sins and the law are always accusing me, yet when I plead guilty, not only in what I am accused of, but in all other things, and look upon myself as justified and perfect in Christ; I find true rest. But suffering a little self-righteousness or some earthly desires to steal into my heart again, my peace is presently disturbed. O Lord, let my desires be only after thee, and grant that I may always find rest.

Jesus, the spring of all my joys,
The life of my delights,
The glory of my brightest days,
And comfort of my nights.
In darkest shades if he appear,
My dawning is begun!
He is my soul's sweet morning-star,
And he my rising sun.

The op'ning heav'ns around me shine
With beams of sacred bliss,
While Jesus shews his heart is mine,
And whispers I AM HIS.
My soul would leave this heavy clay
At that transporting word,
Run up with joy the shining way
To embrace my dearest Lord,

DRAW me, we will run after thee, So'omon's Song i. 4. Divine answer. I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee, Jerem. xxxi. 3.

Christ having promised to draw us all after him, *John xii. 32.* he actually loves and draws us continually. If you do not feel it, it is your own fault. Therefore you must pray always to him to make you sensible of the secret tender drawings of his love, and willing to follow them directly. This praying always is very needful, because we are always miserable, and without being instant and earnest we cannot receive much. Therefore it is not a hard command, but a great benefit and privilege; as if God should say: you are a poor child, always wanting something, but you may always pray to me, and I will always hear and assist and draw thee after me.

O draw me, Saviour, after thee,
So shall I run and never tire:
With gracious words still comfort me;
Be thou my hope, my sole desire:
Free me from ev'ry weight: Nor fear,
Nor sin can come, if thou art here.

O that I as a little child,
May follow thee, nor ever rest,
'Till sweetly thou hast pour'd thy mild
And lowly mind into my breast.
Nor ever may we parted be
'Till I become one spirit with thee.

27 Oct.

(300)

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, Eph. vi. 10. Be thou my strong habitation, wherunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me, for thou art my rock and my fortress, Ps. lxxi. 3. See also Ps. xxxi. 1, 6. For thou hast been a strength for the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, Isa. xxv. 4. Divine answer. There shall be a tabernacle for the shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a place of refuge and for a covert from storm and from rain, Isa. iv. 6. See also Zechar. ii. 5.

This is to be understood of the wounds of Christ; therefore he says: 'Abide in me;' which is done, when we have always such a penitent feeling of our sins, that thereby our hearts are evermore broken, humbled and made desirous and able of being thoroughly healed by his stripes. Without this the knowledge of Christ and his wounds is to no purpose, dead, and like the water poured upon a hard stone.

Where shall I hide this guilty head;
Can rocks or mountains save?
Or shall I wrap me in the shade
Of midnight and the grave?
Is there no shelter from the eye
Of a revenging God?

Jesus, to thy dear wounds I fly,
Bedew me with thy blood.
Those guardian drops my soul secure,
And wash away my sin;
Eternal justice frowns no more,
And conscience smiles within.

28 October.

(301)

ABRAHAM against hope believed in hope, Rom. iv. 21.

O my soul, thou having not like Abraham only one single but many thousand promises and patterns of faithful believers before thee, it is fit that thou shouldest strongly rely on the word in faith. And tho' the Lord delayed his help, and the evil seemed to grow worse and worse, be not weak, but rather strong and rejoice; since the most glorious promises of God are generally fulfilled in such a wondrous manner that he steps forth to save us at a time when there is the least appearance of it, nay the contrary follows. For in the greatest extremities, God is nearest with his help. And this method he chooses, that we may not trust upon any thing that we see or feel, as we are always apt to do, but only upon his bare word, which we can and must only depend upon in the hour of death.

How large the promise' how divine,
To Abrah'm and his seed!
I'll be a God to thee and thine,
Supplying all their need.
The words of this extensive love
From age to age endure;

The angel of the cov'nant proves
And seals the blessing sure.
Our God, how faithful are his ways;
His love endures the same;
Nor from the promise of his grace
Blots out the sinner's name.

I *Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood*, Gal. i. 16. For the *kings commandment was urgent*, much more the commandment of the King of Kings, Dan. iii. 22. Therefore, *be not slothful in business*, Rom xii. 11.

The speediest and easiest method to accomplish our desire of overcoming the evil and doing the good, is an immediate compliance with our first convictions, without conferring with flesh and blood. If we delay the work, we give room to other people without, and to satan and to our sinful hearts from within, to persuade us to the contrary, by which the flesh can easily renew its strength, and the spirit will be weakened. And what can be the consequence of this? but, that either we miscarry in our design, or that the conflict will be afterwards so much sharper, and the good work, if not stifled, dropt intirely, yet it will not be done so completely and with such singleness of heart, as should be. But if we always narrowly watch our hearts, and are faithfully engaging directly even with the least opposition, then our enemies will not be so strong, and we shall have no reason to despair.

J E S U, mighty to renew,
Work in me to will and do,
Turn my nature's rapid tide,
Stem the torrent of my pride.

Take away my darling sin,
Make me willing to be clean;
Make me willing to receive
What thy goodness waits to give.

N Either yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead; and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God, Rom. vi. 13.

If God has my members as weapons and instruments in his hands, I shall certainly be able not only to work, but also to conquer, since he understands full well how to manage them. May the Lord only give me grace not to wind myself out of his hands, else I must needs be like a dead, useless carcase. For how can a pen write alone without being in the hand of a writer? It is true indeed, that it is very hard, nay impossible to be really good and do all that is good, if we undertake it alone; but God himself living and working in us, and we truly delighting in him, it is very easy and pleasant. Therefore care is only to be taken, that our hearts may be always the working-place, and our members the instruments of God, in which and through which he can perform every thing himself.

Now God I serve, to him alone
My thankful homage pay;
My only master, Christ I own,
And him will I obey.
To him my members I present,
Which he will not refuse;

The meanest, basest instrument
His glory deigns to use.
Servant of sin too long I was,
But Christ has set me free;
Glory to his victorious grace
Which freely ransom'd me.

ASK and it shall be given unto you, &c. for every one that asketh, receive, &c. Luke x. 9, 10.

It is not said: he shall receive, but he receives directly, consequently praying and receiving is the same thing; every groane is an effectual grasp into the tender heart and treasury of our loving Father in heaven. Why should we then be slothful and not rather pray without ceasing? For tho' we should be obliged to tarry, and are only instant in prayer, we have no reason to think, that we have received nothing; since even this being instant is a new gift and a hearing of our prayer; for without an addition of grace and strength, we would certainly not be so instant.

Rise, my soul, with ardour rise,
Breathe thy wishes to the skies;
Freely pour out all thy mind,
Seek, and thou art sure to find:
Ready art thou to receive?
Readier is thy God to give.

Heav'nly Father, Lord of all,
Hear, and shew thou hear'st my call;
Let my cries thy throne assail
Ent'ring now within the veil:
Give the benefits I claim:
Lord, I ask in Jesus' name!

1 Nov.

(305)

AT the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, Dan. ix. 23. Continuing instant in prayer, Rom. xii. 12.

As soon as we begin to pray earnestly, the Lord hears and signs our petitions to help and bless us: for every supplication is the pronouncing and sealing of a blessing. It is true, we don't always observe it immediately; but in due time we shall certainly receive even a visible help. Therefore let us only go on, and put, as it were, one weight of prayers after another upon the scales of sanctuary; surely our greatest distress will at last be overbalanced and salvation brought down, if not by the first, yet perhaps by the second, or the rest of our prayers. But it is well to be observed, that we must also be watchful, and not act contrary to the intent of our prayers, which might provoke the Lord to disannul the signing of his FIAT (Grant) again, or at least to delay his help. But when he tarries long, it is not his intention to give us a denial, but rather make us more desirous: and earnest that he may bestow so much more upon us afterwards; for this delay he will certainly well recompense and grant us abundantly above all that we could ask or think.

Lord, I will not let thee go,
Till the blessing thou bestow:
Hear my advocate divine;
Lo! to his my suit I join:
Join'd to his, it cannot fail,
Bless me, for I will prevail!

Friend of sinners; King of saints,
Answer my minutest wants;
All my largest thoughts require,
Grant me all my heart's desire;
Give me 'till my cup run o'er,
U All and infinitely more.

31 Oct.

(304)

ASK and it shall be given unto you, &c. for every one that asketh, receive, &c. Luke x. 9, 10.

It is not said: he shall receive, but he receives directly, consequently praying and receiving is the same thing; every groane is an effectual grasp into the tender heart and treasury of our loving Father in heaven. Why should we then be slothful and not rather pray without ceasing? For tho' we should be obliged to tarry, and are only instant in prayer, we have no reason to think, that we have received nothing; since even this being instant is a new gift and a hearing of our prayer; for without an addition of grace and strength, we would certainly not be so instant.

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Ready art thou to receive?
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i Nov.

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Answer my minutest wants;
All my largest thoughts require,
Grant me all my heart's desire;
Give me 'till my cup run o'er,
U All and infinitely more.

W H E N the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise: she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat, Gen. iii. 6. Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin, &c. James i. 14, 15.

Thus one sin always begets another. By the eyes it rushes into the heart; from the heart it proceeds into the mouth, hands, and feet; from us it is transferred upon others, and thus we go on sinning and falling deeper and deeper. Therefore we must set a strict guard over our eyes and ears, be very cautious and resist the least beginnings of sin, not making light of any: for the least spark of worldly lust being entertained and cherished, we eat of *the forbidden tree* standing everywhere before us, and thereby a great fire may be kindled. But having always our eyes fixed in all our conversation upon the presence of God in Christ, so as to walk continually in the light, and directly to quell the least inward motion of evil; they will never break forth into gross outward sins, but we shall daily grow in grace. May the Lord enable me to practise this good lesson, and watch himself continually over my heart, eyes, lips and all other senses and thoughts.

With my whole heart I seek thy face,
O let me never stray
From thy commands, O God of grace,
Nor tread the sinner's way.

Thy word I hide within my heart
To keep my conscience clean,
And be an everlasting guard
From ev'ry rising sin.

3 Nov.

(307)

The Tree of Life.

THE preaching of the cross is to us, which are saved, the power of God,
1 Cor. i. 18.

O that I might always feed upon; and experience its power till I have obtained a complete victory. Whosoever was bit by the fiery serpent, looking upon the brazen serpent, lived, *Numb. xxi. 9.* Thus always to look upon Christ crucified is the one thing needful, from which all other blessings flow, *John iii. 14, 15.* O Lord, grant that the eyes of my faith may be unmoveably fixed on me, and on thee; upon the cross, so as to be intirely healed at last: for as long as I live I feel the biting of the old serpent, therefore must I also look upon thee continually.

So did the Hebrew prophet raise
The brazen serpent high;
The wounded felt immediate ease;
The camp forbore to die.
Look upward in the dying hour
And live, the prophet cries;
But Christ performs a nobler cure
When faith lifts up her eyes.

High on the cross the Saviour hung;
High on the heav'ns he reigns:
Here sinners, by th' old serpent stung,
Look, and forget their pains.
Then God's own Son is lifted up,
A dying world revives;
The Jew beholds the glorious hope,
The expiring Gentile lives.

U z

4 Nov.

(308)

THE law is not made for a righteous man, to condemn him, 1 Tim. i. 9.

For he being dead to the law by the death of Christ and living to God in eternal righteousness, innocence, life and happiness; the law can condemn him no more than a dead man, or one that liveth in heaven already, nay Christ himself: for it condemns only the sin, but he is in Christ without sin, since he has him, who has taken away the sins of the whole world, and consequently his sins also. But the sin being abolished, the wrath and curse of the law is also removed, and grace and blessing restored in its place. Christ has taken all his sins upon himself, and imparted his own perfect obedience to the law to him; therefore in Christ he has fully satisfied all the demands of the law, and can be intirely free from its dreadful denunciations in his conscience: the blood of Christ cleansing us from all sins, and consequently from an evil conscience, *Heb. ix. 9—14. chap. x. 22.* Being sprinkled and covered with his blood find golden robes of grace, the Lord is perfectly pleased and does not and fault with us any more. It makes intercession for us with God; crying continually, as *Luther* observes, *abba, abba, mercy, mercy, peace, peace,* and obtains grace, pardon, life, and salvation.

Blood has a voice to pierce the skies,
Revenge, the blood of Abel cries:
But the dear stream when Christ was slain,
Speaks peace as loud from ev'ry vein.

Pardon and peace from God on high;
Behold, he lays his vengeance by;
And rebels that deserve his sword,
Become the fav'rites of the Lord.

5 Nov.

(309)

THE man will not be in rest, until he has finished the thing this day,
Ruth. iii. 18.

This we may say with more reason and propriety of Christ, the author and finisher of faith. O my soul, keep close to him, he will surely finish his work in thy heart. But be thou not at rest neither, but abiding through faith in Christ follow holiness constantly and press toward to the mark evermore, crying always: 'The very God of peace sanctify us wholly, &c.' 1 Thess. v. 23, 24. that thou mayst also finish thy day's-work here in this present life and receive thy full lot and inheritance hereafter. Now, O Lord, grant that by thy own planting and care I may have plenty of fruits and be thoroughly prepared for mine inheritance, John xv. 16. Let me cease from working in my own strength and keep me always from running imprudently into unnecessary sufferings; but whatever measure of work and sufferings thou hast thought proper to ordain for me, grant that I may chearfully take it upon me, and never rest till it is finished.

Then let my soul march boldly on,
Press forward to the heav'nly gate;
There peace and joy eternal reign,
And glitt'ring robes for conqu'rors wait.

Oh! like the sun may I fulfil
Th' appointed duties of my life;

With ready mind and active will
March on and finish all my strife.

There shall I wear a starry crown,
And triumph in almighty grace,
While all the armies of the skies

U 3 Join in my glorious leader's praise,

6 Nov.

(310)

*L*ET your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have, Heb. xiii. 5. For they that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition and destruction: for the love of money is the root of all evil, &c. 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.

A covetous man is called an idolater and has no part in the kingdom of God: but who believes that he is covetous? Now here you see, that every one is actually covetous, who is not content with what he has. And what says the apostle of such as will be rich? *They fall.* Not only, it was possible for them to fall. No, they actually fall. O reader, be frightened, destroy the covetous desires of thy heart, and keep it disentangled from temporal things; for who knows how soon you must go out of this world and leave every thing behind?—Away from it with thy heart, else death will be very hard. The Christians motto is, GOD AND ENOUGH: for he that has God, is content, and consequently always rich enough, even in poverty. And that must be a covetous man indeed, who has not enough having God. O Lord, make me so free by faith from the love of earthly things, that I may equally praise thee, whether thou be pleased to give me some thing or take it away from me; and that I may never covetously refuse that to others or to myself, what thou hast given and should be bestowed upon us.

The rich young man whom Jesus lov'd,
Should warn us to forbear:

His love of earthly treasures prov'd
A fatal golden snare: MARK x. 21.

7 Nov.

(311)

THE soul of the diligent shall be made fat, Prov. xiii. 4.

You are concerned for having no more grace. What is the reason? because you are indolent, careless, and unfaithful. And tho' you have no warrant even for an hour to live, yet unreasonably you suppose to have time enough; therefore you are not serious, diligent and fervent every hour in praying for sufficient strength, to be always prepared and have boldness in death. No wonder, if you do not immediately resist sin, that it grows strong, and you are always weak and discouraged. And how can you expect to receive more grace, if you do not faithfully improve what little you have? If you would but diligently and faithfully apply yourself to the word and prayer, God would certainly not be wanting on his part to fulfil his promises and give you enough: but not otherwise. For it is well to be observed: and we must know it once for all, that there is no such a thing as making any progress in grace and carrying our point, unless we are hourly mindful of ourselves, watching and praying against all sins, and whatever may be a hindrance on one hand; and following with all diligence that which is good and what may be a furtherance on the other. It is not enough to use SOME, but we must use ALL diligence, and according as our grace is increased, our diligence must increase also; since it goes against the stream. -

Right to resist the sinful pow'r,
Requires a strong restraint.

We must be watchful ev'ry hour,
U 4 And pray, but ne'er faint.

*I*N lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves, Phil. ii. 3. Bear you one another burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, &c. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone and not in another, Gal. vi. 2, 3, 4.

If we were truly humble and looked upon ourselves as the most miserable of all, we would willingly submit to all adversities, and patiently bear the burdens and infirmities of others, considering, that God must bear with us a great deal more. Observing therefore the faults of our neighbour, we must not forget our own. Perhaps in other things we are weaker than he. This must restrain us from judging rashly, or speaking unadvisedly to others; but first we should speak to God about it, and then try with gentle means to bring him to rights again. Nay the best method is to consider our neighbour on the good, and ourselves on the bad side, and to see whether we can excuse him, and accuse ourselves. And if his fault could not be excused in no manner, we must not suffer him to stir up our corruption, but to come in with prayer between God and him, to plead his cause before his throne in hearty love. This requires more than censorious judging. It is very easy to find fault with others but to show love and to restore them by prayer and brotherly correction, is quite another thing.

Bless'd are the souls, who stand afar
From rage and passion, noise and war;

God will secure their happy state,
And plead their cause against the great.

9 Nov.

(313)

THOU openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing,
Psal. cxlv. 16.

Who considers these words enough? the hand of God being my capital cellar and storehouse, is it not a shame to be anxiously careful for any thing? has the Lord all things in his hand, then surely I shall receive what he has for me; none will be able to withhold it. Faith has always a free access to the treasures of God, who is never wanting. ' Christians (as Luther observes) have their chests, cellars and ' treasures in such a high place, even in God, that no thief can rob ' them, and they are sure to have enough in God. . . . And tho' the ' Lord should try them with want a little while, yet he relieves them ' in due time, their bread must rain from heaven rather, then that they ' should be left without. You need not, says Christ, seek these other ' things, straight they shall be brought to you, if you only abide in me. ' If this does not comfort and strengthen us, nothing else will. Now many rely on their ' full pockets and purses, but if they had true faith, it would be equally the same, whether ' they had it in their fists and trunks already or not: it would be enough that they believed ' and had it in God's hand, purse and chest. It is all one to believers full purses or none. If ' the Lord is pleased to bestow some provision upon him, he blesses him for it, and is careful to apply it well. But if he thinks proper to deny it him, he is equally content and ' cheerful.

The Lord is good, the Lord is kind;
Great is his grace, his mercy sure;

And the whole race of man shall find
His truth from age to age endure.

EVERY man has his proper gift of God, 1 Cor. vii 7.

Therefore what God withholds from us, namely, sensible joy or other particular gifts, to do something extraordinary for his glory, cannot be extorted from him by force. Neither does he require it of us, since it is his own gift, which he freely bestows upon whom and when he pleases. Be ye only faithful in what you have, and what you are commanded to do. Especially avoid sin, (which above all things disturbs our peace) and keep close to the word of God and to prayer; for this is thy own, what God requires of thee. And if you do your part, God will do his part also, he will quicken thee and grant thee all, when it is most needful, and you have learned how to use it right. O Lord, suffer me never to go beyond the bounds of my own measure, that I may undertake nothing without thy grace and call, and neglect that which I am called to. Shew me always my own gift and the proper work which I am ordered to perform. Let me never be drawn away, even in seemingly good things, by my own will, that I may not run before thee, but listen always at thy command, and thus be ever ready at thy service according to thy own will. Grant, O Lord! that I may be intirely resigned to thy good pleasure, and be faithful in all things, as it becomes one, that is thy whole sacrifice and property. Amen.

Behold the potter and the clay,
He forms his vessels as he please:
Such is our God, and such are we,
The subjects of his high decrees.

Doth not the workman's pow'r extend
O'er all the mass, which part to choose,
And mould it for a nobler end,
And which to leave for viler use?

11 Nov.

(315)

HE, the Lord, *will beautify the meek (poor) with salvation*, Psal. cxlix 4. *And if ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye*, 1 Pet. iii. 4. Psal. x. 17. xxii. 26. xxxvii. 11. xlviii. 10. Isa. liv. 11.

All this is for the humble and poor in spirit. How does that agree? poor, and yet blessed? O, yes, poor in ourselves, but blessed and glorious in Christ. If we never experience his glory, the reason is, we are not truly sensible of our misery; but when we are come quite low, let us confidently lay hold on Christ, and we shall be blessed: for all is ours. We may say, O Lord, if thou art a glorious help to the needy, lo! here is want and misery enough; therefore I come with all my want and poverty to the fulness of thy grace and riches, with my darkness to thy light, with my death to thy life. Grant that all my evils may be swallowed up by thy goodness and glorious deliverance. Mine innumerable wants I set before thee as so many empty vessels, and desire to have them filled with thy spiritual and heavenly blessings.

O might I hear thy heav'nly tongue
But whisper, 'Thou art mine!'
Those gentle words should raise my song
To notes almost divine.

How would my leaping heart rejoice,
And think my heav'n secure!
I trust the all-creating voice,
And faith desires no more.

12 Nov.

(316)

*B*E renewed in the spirit of your mind, Eph. iv. 23.

O Lord, grant that I may daily and hourly repent, have evermore a tender feeling of my sins, and so renew my baptismal covenant, that by the power of thy death, the old man may be crucified, and by the power of thy resurrection the new man may rise up and grow more and more every morning. Let me ever be in true earnest, and look upon every day as the very first and the very last, that with each I may, as it were, begin anew to work out my salvation with fear and trembling, and so be always prepared for death and eternity. Give me grace to surmount all difficulties, and to avoid every thing what may prove a torment of conscience in the hour of death. And as there is no standing still, I humbly beseech thee to stir me up daily and hourly more and more, that I may make all haste and save my soul.

Lord, I am vile, conceiv'd in sin ;
And born unholy and unclean ;
Sprung from the man whose guilty fall
Corrupts the race and taints us all.
Soon as we draw our infant-breath
The seeds of sin grow up for death ;

The law demands a perfect heart ;
But we 're defil'd in every part.
Great God, create my heart anew,
And form my spirit pure and true :
O make me wise betimes to spy
My danger and my remedy.

13 Nov.

(317)

HE has dispersed, he has given to the poor ; his righteousness endures for ever, Psal. cxii. 9. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, Eccles. xi. 6.

Those that lay up treasures on earth suffer nothing to lie long useless, but lend it out as fast as they can ; and such as desire to reap soon and plentifully, are careful to sow soon and plentifully. Therefore lend and sow ye also in good time, for there may be times, when you cannot shew charity, or at least not so largely. Luther, on this passage says.

‘ We must not pretend to pay the debt of charity with some poor mites and pences. If you will give something, give bountifully ; take your hands full, as if you were a sowing, like the poor widow with her two mites, which she sowed out freely tho’ it was her whole substance. But the rich ones were not so liberal, but covetously offered on’y what they could spare very well. Is it not said : we should sow, and consequently take hands full ; for God loving a cheerful giver, will in his turn dispense again bountifully with you that ye shall have all sufficiency in all things, to every good work. (But God dispensing so bountifully with you, why should ye then grudge him any thing, or make only such poor returns ?) For what we do to our neighbour, is the same as if it were done to God himself.’

Awake my zeal, awake my love,
And serve my Saviour here below,
In works which all the saints above
Which holy angels cannot do.

Awake, my charity, and feed
The hungry soul, and clothe the poor :
In heav’n are found no sons of need,
There all these duties are no more.

14 Nov.

(318)

*H*E shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities. Psal. cxxx. 8. *O the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, Jerem. xiv. 8. In wrath remember mercy, Habak. iii. 2.*

Despair not, O my soul, in any tribulation or conflict, as if it were impossible to overcome it. The all healing word of God contains advice and comfort for all cases. The Lord being thy helper in all adversities, and able to turn the sharpest afflictions into the greatest blessings, he would never smite, or withhold something from thee, if he was not willing also to heal, and give thee something better in its place. O Lord, I trust that thou wilt carry me through all difficulties. Tho' my misery and weakness were ever so great, yet there is nothing too great for thee, it is all one to thee, to help in great and little distresses: nay, the more I am surrounded with grief and weakness, the more wilt thou pity, spare and nourish me, as a tender mother does the least of all her children, and the more there will be occasion for thee to shew thy mighty salvation; for the least is impossible to me, but the greatest and most difficult things are possible and very easy to thee. The sharper and longer my distress and conflicts have been, the nearer, greater and sweeter, I trust, will also be my victory and salvation, and I shall not be tempted above measure. Yes the Lord will assist me to conquer all, even the most stubborn enemies.

There's full redemption at his throne
For sinners long enslav'd

The great Redeemer is his Son:
And Israel shall be sav'd.

15 Nov.

(319)

T H E R E is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel; thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until you take away the accursed thing from among you, Joshua vii 13. See also 2 Pet i. 4. *having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

The entertaining of every worldly lust and indulgence of any known wilful sin, is such an accursed thing, by which we are deprived of the power of God, that we cannot stand before our enemies. Behold therefore the severity of God, *Josb. vii. 21—26.* and be more earnest. Make all haste to flee from the lust of the world, especially from the lust of the eye, which is the love of money. It being impossible to receive any grace and strength until the accursed thing be taken away, what more needful then to break off, even the most subtle and specious bonds of unrighteousness. Unless all splinters of the unjust Mammon be taken out, the wound cannot be healed up. Nay, examine thyself closely in other things, and whatever sinful lust harbours in thy breast, be faithful to put it off and flee from it, else you must not wonder on your being so weak in spirit. He that does not resist the sinful motions of his heart, will also very easily give a loose to his hands and tongue. But he that immediatly subdues the inward corruption, will certainly be preserved from their breaking out in sinful actions. O Lord, deliver me from all accursed things, and keep my heart always under thy closest inspection and discipline. Amen.

Why should my passion mix with earth, Why should I cleave to things below,
And thus debase my heav'nly birth? And let my God, my Saviour go?

16 Nov.

(320)

I T is done as thou hast commanded, Luke xiv. 22. I have finished the work thou gavest me to do, John xvii. 4. By one offering he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified, Heb x. 14.

We must do to-day all that is possible. The day that is to come has its own work again, and is very uncertain. Especially we must not defer it one hour, to repent and get a true interest in the salvation of Christ. O may the Lord give me such an assurance, that I may always be able even in the hour of death, to look upon myself as one that is perfect by his offering.

And is this life prolong'd to me?

Are days and seasons giv'n?

Shall I not then prepare to be

A fitter heir for heav'n?

I'll never let these moments pass,

These golden hours be gone:

Lord I accept thy offer'd grace,

I bow before thy throne.

Now cleanse my soul from ev'ry sin

By my Redeemer's blood:

Now let my flesh and heart begin

The honours of my God.

Let me no more my soul defile

With sin's deceitful toys:

Let chearful hope increasing still

Approach to heav'nly joys.

17 Nov.

(321)

SHALL there be an evil in the city, and the Lord has not done it?
Amos iii. 6. *And in very deed for this cause, have I raised thee, Pharaoh, up, Exod. ix. 16. For all things come from God, Sirach xi. 14.*

A christian has a great deal to suffer, but he is so fearless, sure and content, as if he were possessor of all the goods in the world; and if every thing should be taken from him, he comforts himself with God, who cannot be taken from him, and who can always make as much again and more, as there is in the whole world. Whether he be rich or poor, praised or blamed, is all the same to him, for he knows that every thing comes from God. Therefore every one in his greatest distress must know, that it is the Lord who ordered it, when death and devils raise against him: for thus saith the Lord, *This devil have I in my hand, his wicked will and desires are in my power to control them as I please.* Thou art my poor worm and hast kept my word; but when I call the devil to tear thee to pieces; he is swelled with pride and anger, desiring to devour thee all at once; and thou art discouraged and frightened: but when thou risest up again upon the wings of thy faith, God is above death, devils, sin and hell, that all these enemies cannot even hurt only one of thy hairs. For who can attack and destroy the good allies of God, the children of his covenant, who are carried in his womb, say the very apple of his eye? These are Luther's words.

He brought the spirit's powerful sword
To slay our deadly foes:

X Our sins shall die beneath his word,
And hell in vain oppose.

18 Nov.

(322)

FOLLOW me, Luke v. 27. and, *be not led by thy own will*, Sirach xviii. 30. *and endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ*, 2 Tim. ii 3.

He that breaks his own will in every thing, and resolutely resists his natural reluctance to prayer, love, humility, and every good work, shews more power, than another who can do it with more ease. with this faithfulness the Lord is so well pleased, that he rewards it at last, and gives us grace to do it also with a willing heart; but we must first be made truly sensible of the deep corruption of our hearts, that then we may use the more violence in prayer. And if we are but going on in this conflict, the delays of God are soon made up with so much greater deliverance. But if we pray only, and do not also quickly resist the propensity of our own heart in all things, there will never be such a thing as making any progress at all, since the stubbornness of our flesh requires it, that prayer and conflict must always go hand in hand. Only it is to be observed, that all this must be done in faith. Now, O Lord, grant that I may quickly take all thy hints. Thou art a faithful God indeed, thou callest, warnest and movest me often enough; O that I was faithful also punctually and immediately to follow thee in all things, should it be ever so much against the inclination of my heart at first. May I never thro' unbelief, unfaithfulness, confusion, self-will, and overdoings, bring any affliction upon me, and hurt myself, not so much as in body, much less in soul.

My dearest Saviour and my guide,
I would be walking at thy side:

O let me never run astray,
Nor follow the forbidden way.

19 Nov.

(323)

THE Lord is not far from every one of us ; for in him we live and move, and have our being. Acts xvii. 27, 28. Even the very hairs of our head are all numbered, Luke xii 7.

O the close, and more than maternal care ! Nothing is so mean, but it is under the providence of God, since even the least things can either hurt or profit the Soul. And how sweet is it to observe his footsteps even in the minutest things, and to be satisfied, that we may trust our greater and lesser concerns to his care ! O Lord, grant that I may never swerve from, and do any thing without thee ; but that my going in and going out may be always done in thy presence, as if I had to do with none but thee ; nay, as if we both lived alone together in the world. O that I could transact as it were, all my affairs with thee alone, and in all p'aces look upon thee as if thou wast only a God for me. Let me always carefully observe all the inward and outward testimonies of thy providence, so as daily and hourly to have a true sense of thy gracious presence in every thing more or less important ; and thereby to be ever strengthened in faith and kept in a composed state of mind, considering that nothing happens by mere chance, but every thing is wisely ordered by thy providential care to our good ; firmly believing, if any thing goes contrary to expectation, that something better will follow in its stead, if we only can be quiet and wait the time.

God, that must stoop to view the skies,
And how to see what angels do,
Down to our earth he casts his eyes,
And bends his footsteps downward too. X 2

He over-rules all mortal things,
And manages our mean affairs ;
On humble souls the King of kings
Bestows his counsels and his cares,

CLEAVE to that which is good, Rom. xii. 9. Seek those things which are above, Col. iii. 1.

The manners of such things or persons as we frequently converse with, cleave very easily to us. If we converse much with God and heavenly things, we shall be heavenly-minded, but if we deal much with the world and temporal things, we must be sensual and worldly-minded. Up therefore with thy heart to God. Lift it hourly up to him; and tho' it sinks down often to the earth again, yet the Lord has patience, and will as often receive and accept of it again. Therefore raise it up continually and take great care to keep it above, that it may not sink down and be defiled and cloyed with worldly things again. Thus it will be easy, whilst on the contrary it is a hard matter to abide in a spiritual frame; like a feather which easily rises higher and higher when kept above ground, but moves very heavy upwards, when once fallen into the dirt. This you may take as a lively figure of an easy and heavy method in the practice of religion. Choose now, which you please. O! that I may always choose the best, namely, the work and sufferings of the Lord, and never plunge myself into needless troubles and conflicts.

Descend from heav'n, immortal dove,
Stoop down and take us on thy wings,
And mount and bear us far above
The reach of these inferious things.

Beyond, beyond this lower sky,
Up where eternal ages roll,
Where solid pleasures never die,
And fruits immortal feast the soul.

L O R D, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, &c. Luke ii. 29. 30.

Say to them that are of a fearful heart : be strong, &c. Isa. xxxv. 3, 4.

Not the weak faith of a fearful, trembling and tempted believer, but the wilful unbelief only is damnable. If I do not reject the ransom of Christ my surety, but am desirous to accept of it by faith, it is as impossible that God can reject me, as it is impossible for him to reject my surety, and his own decree and eternal counsel of love ; which can never be. O Lord, it goes beyond the reach of all reason, how I shall depart in faith and peace, since I am the weakest of all, and would despair a thousand times for once ; But as ‘ thy peace is said to pass all understanding,’ Phil. iv. 7. it will nevertheless be sufficient to keep even the most fearful and weakest soul ; for it is not by any power of our own, but solely by thy divine power that we shall ‘ be kept through ‘ faith unto salvation.’ And it is equally the same to thee to carry the weakest or the strongest through the gates of death ; for since thou art always the same wise, gracious and mighty God in all circumstances and must do the work alone for both ; thou wilt then surely lend me also thine all-sufficient aid and assistance.

Saints by the pow’r of God are kept,

‘Till the salvation come ;

We walk by faith, as strangers here,

‘Till Christ shall call us home.

Lord, at thy temple we appear

As happy Simeon came,

And hope to meet our Saviour here ;

X 3 O make our joys the same !

22 Nov.

(326)

O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches, Psa. civ. 24. *Who is wise and will observe those things,* Psal. cviii. 43.

O Lord, how many are thine unknown mercies! I am surrounded with thy goods on all sides, and yet I observe and acknowledge them so little! If thou hast punished even the heathen, for not having minded and glorified thee by thy works, what will become of me? Pardon, O Lord, this my blindness and ingratitude, and be pleased to add to all thy benefactions this one more, that I may always be thankful for every thing, especially for the unspeakable gift of thy Son, and after that for all thy works of creation and providence also. Grant that in all thy creatures I may see and adore thine infinite power, wisdom and goodness, thereby continually to be strengthened in faith and stirred up to thy praise and love. Thus let me always converse with, cleave to thee. and have uninterrupted communion with thee, that nothing may interfere and disturb this religious disposition of my soul in the least. Yes, O Lord, grant me this wisdom and close attention, for thy glory's sake. Amen

The glories of my maker, God,
My joyful voice shall sing,
And call the nations to adore
Their former and their king.

The brightness of our maker's name
The wide creation fills;
And his unbounded grandeur flies
Beyond the heav'nly hills.

23 Nov.

(327).

THE sword of the Lord and Gideon, Judges vii. 20. For they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not, Numb. xiv. 9. But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and has followed me fully, him will I bring into the land, wherewith he went, ver. 24. Surely the wrath of men shall praise thee, Psal. lxxvi. 10.

Take care, O my soul, that there may also be another, namely, a kingly spirit with thee, as there was with Joshua and Caleb, not to be discouraged on account of thy weakness and great number of frailties and enemies, as if it was impossible to live holy and get the victory. Behold Christ, the true and great Joshua and Caleb, marches out before thee, to make war himself against thine enemies, and who can conquer him! he is unchangeable, his spirit now is as mighty, as ever, and his sword as powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword. Against thy various infirmities he offers a so a variety of divine strength, and against each of thine enemies he holds forth to thee a particular sword in his word; and abiding in his word thou shalt surely conquer. Tho' the enemy should raise thine inward and outward calamities to the highest degree as so many strong wal's, yet he must fall: one single word will strike him down.

Not all that tyrants think or say,
With rage and lightning in their eyes,

Nor hell shall fright my heart away,
Should hell with all its legions rise.

24 Nov.

(328)

*L*O, *I am with you always, even unto the end of the world, Matth xxviii. 20. I will be with him in trouble, Ps. xci. 15. Therefore, be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them, Jere. i. 17.*

O my soul, tell the Lord all thy complaints, as if he was visibly present; for he is actually present in all thy troubles with his advice and help. Faith does not see God, yet he keeps and speaks to him as if he saw him, and by his trials and assistances grows only stronger; consequently we have no reason to fear any distress. By afflictions God will not discourage us from believing; far from it, he rather encourages us to lay hold on his word by faith. And tho' we feel more sin and anguish of conscience in times of distress, it ought to make us more humble indeed, but at the same time to bring us closer to Christ who blotteth out all our transgressions, and exercise and strengthen our faith. Therefore (as Luther observes) 'even the sins of a christian are for his good, and if he had no sin, he should not be so well off; for without the feeling of the sins and desperate corruptions of the heart in my conscience, I should never take so much of the power of the word of God.' Neither would prayer flow so well, for the fire being removed from under a skillet, a congealing follows presently.

Chearful we walk the desert thro',
While faith inspires a heavenly ray;

Tho' lions roar, and tempests blow,
And rocks and dangers fill the way.

25 Nov.

(329)

I In them, and thou in me, John xvii 23. Christ liveth in me, Gal. ii. 20.

Luther on these words says: ' Christ living in me (who is, as it were, one piece with me) there must by him be grace, righteousness, eternal life and salvation in me, and law, sin and death be abolished. There is such a close union between Christ and a believer, as if they were but one person and can never be separated from one another. Faith cleaving always to Christ, can boldly say; I am Christ; not personally, but his righteousness, victory, life, and all what he has, is my own; and Christ says again: I am this poor sinner, for having taken his sins and death upon me, they are actually mine.' O happy charge! without Christ there is not a moment's peace, but being in him and one body with him, who can hurt me and lay any thing to my charge? O Lord, grant that I may always truly live in thee by faith as in my element. Thou being the Son of God, hast loved and given thyself for me, I can never, never be given over to death and hell.

Why should we start and fear to die?
What tim'rous worms we mortals are?
Death is the gate of endless joy,
And yet wedread to enter there.

Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillars are,
While on this breast I lean my head
And breathe my life out sweetly there.

26 Nov.

(330)

I will heal your backslidings, Jer. iii. 22. It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure, Phil. ii. 13.

O my dear Saviour, I would fain believe in thee, be faithful, obedient, and work always that which is good. And since this is also thy will, I trust it shall be done; for if thou wilt and I will, who can hinder it? true, sin, flesh, world and devils are against it; but shall these enemies be stronger than thou, the mighty God? shall their opposition be able to quell thy work in me, if I do not consent to it? that can never be. The more violence they use upon me, the more violence will I use upon thee in prayer; and the more I pray, the more glorious will thine assistance be: the more they hinder, the more thou wilt further, that all their hindrances shall be swallowed up by thy furtherances, as the serpents of the sorcerers in Egypt were swallowed up by the serpent of Moses. The enemy will fall by his own sword, and the greatest distress and opposition will turn to my good and to the promoting of thy work. For if I do not abide in Christ, praying continually, every thing can hinder me, but abiding in him, all obstructions not only prove effectual, but useful and profitable.

We honour our exalted King;
How sweet are his commands!
He guards our souls from hell and sin,
By his almighty hands.

Fearless of hell and ghastly death,
We'll break through ev'ry foe;
The wings of love and arms of faith
Shall bear us conqu'rors thro'.

27 Nov.

(331)

I Am like a green fir-tree, from me is thy fruit found, Hof. xiv. 8. I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground, Mal. iii. 11. See also Isa. xxvii. 2, 6.

Is it not a disagreeable thing for a gardener to see the finest blossoms and fruits destroyed by the caterpillars? doth it not rejoice him to see all the branches bow with ripe fruits? O my heavenly Gardener, grant that I may not displease but rejoice thy heart also. Let me abide in Christ, my true vine, and always bring forth good fruits. But since every fruit has its enemies, and thou hast no sooner worked any thing than the insects of sin endeavour to destroy it; I beseech thee to make me fearful and careful in every good work. Rebuke the devourer presently, and preserve me as a branch of CHRIST, night and day, as thou hast promised, that my fruits may endure to eternity. Doth a diligent gardener dress and cultivate his garden as well as he can, why should not thou cultivate my heart also? since thou art honoured by my fruits. O! yes, I trust the crystal stream of thy throne will water me, that I can go and bring forth greater plenty of fruits.

Like trees of myrrh and spice we stand
Planted by God the Father's hand;
And all his springs in Zion flow,
To make the young plantation grow.

Let my beloved come and taste
His pleasant fruits at his own feast.
I come, my spouse, I come, he cries
With love and pleasure in his eyes.

28 Nov.

(332)

I Will (do it), Matth. viii. 3. *And what is that? whatever thou desired:
For, the Lord will fulfil the desire of them that fear him, Psal. cxv 19.*

Yea, he does exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, granting not only according to the notion of our narrow hearts, but according to the riches of his glory, as becomes his Majesty. Christ delights in great petitions, for he is a great Lord, and is rich unto all that call upon him. He has all the riches of his merits and gifts not for himself, (since being the very God, he wanted nothing for himself) but only for us, even the rebellious, who sincerely call upon him. Therefore what he has as mediator, is not his, but all belongs to me, if I but call upon him. O my soul, pray to him, nay be much in prayer, and as often as thou pourest out thy soul before him in prayer, let nothing resound in thy heart, but these words: *I will, I will do it.* As God can never lie, there is not one single groan lost; but every one will be found to be a chaff, yea a jewel in the life to come, by which thy riches are increased, and one treasure put to another. O! how much is there neglected in this already! why should you not be earnest and instant now to redeem that little remaining part of thy time, by prayer for eternity, to lay up there many treasures and richly adorn thy crown. O Lord, grant that this may be done.

Now is the time, he bends his ear,
And waits for your request;

Come, lest he rouse his wrath, and swear,
Ye shall not see my rest.

29 Nov.

(333)

JOSHUA drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai, Joshua viii. 26. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil, 1 John iii. 8.

The dominion of any one sin is inconsistent with the grace of God and true saving faith, Rom. vi. 14. Therefore all these wicked inhabitants of thy heart must be destroyed, and none suffered to live and reign in thee; since even by one single sin we may be utterly undone and destroyed as a bird is caught in one single snare. And tho' you are actually converted and have gained the dominion over your sins; yet you must not draw back your hand and lay the spear and sword of the spirit aside. There is no rest or cessation of arms here. Satan left Christ only for a time; much more will he renew his assaults upon us again and again: Nay, if a man is not watchful, but presumptuous, he takes to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself. But if one consist lasteth long, remember that this is also the cause of others, and even the ancient fathers have gone on under it till they were gray. At last the victory will be the more sweet and glorious. Only above all things take the shield of faith; for faith alone triumphs, by which we are in covenant with Christ, and he makes one cause with us.

'Tis faith that conquers earth and hell,
By a celestial pow'r;

This is the grace that shall prevail
In the decisive hour.

30 Nov.

(334)

COME, buy without money and without price, Isa. lv. 1. Come, for all things are now ready, Luke xiv. 17. Him (be who it will) that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out, John vi. 37.

How could a tender mother's heart cast out her sick child calling for help? Come, my poor soul, come only as well as thou canst. Better to come in thy miserable, unwilling and lazy condition, than not at all. Don't imagine that it will be disagreeable to Christ, if you must put a constraint upon yourself, and cannot come, and pray to him with a sensible joy and strong faith; for he does not say; him that comes with a sensible strong faith; but 'him that comes,' without any limitation, 'I will in no wise cast out.' It is not required, to bring any money of our own worthiness, but only the who'e heap of our misery along with us, and desire grace. God does not look upon the sensible power; (for this is his particular gift, which he could soon give, if need was) but upon the sincerity, application and earnestness of a poor sinner, John Bunyan very fitly compares such a one, to a man, who would fain ride a full gallop, whose horse is hardly able to go a good trot. In this instance the intention of the rider is not to be judged by the slow paces of his horse, (which resembles our corrupt and unwilling nature) but by his whippings, furrings and beatings of the beast.

See, dearest Lord, our willing souls
Accept thine offer'd grace;

We bless the great Redeemer's love,
And give the Father praise.

1 Dec.

(335)

*BE not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good, Rom. xii. 21.
For, who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is
good, 1 Pet. iii. 13.*

There is none, for it is twice said: *All is yours, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22.*
But what is mine, must be serviceable and useful to me. *Rom. viii. 18.*
we are to'd, that al. things, consequently the very devils, with their
whole armour, work together for our good, to make us more victorious
and religious; and having so many assistants, we must at last be good
indeed. For whatever will hurt us, if we take the right course, must
rather serve for a sword of defence in the hand of faith. For instance,
if any thing contrary happens to you do not look upon men, but directly
upon God himself, as if you had to do with him alone. Therefore
take it patiently from his hands for your trial and humbling: then
you have a blessing directly. If you meet with strong temptation, by the great corrup-
tions from within and without, let them make you only so much more wise and careful as to
think, because there are dangerous enemies, I must watch and use all possible violence.
And tho' it is right and needful to despair of thy own sufficiency and strength; yet if
you keep and press only so much closer to Christ in prayer and faith, like a child to its
mother, when it sees a devouring beast running upon it, all the evil will certainly turn to
your good. Luther says very well: 'Every thing of a sheep of Christ, is of some use,
'even its dung (sin) not excepted.'

How glorious, Lord, thy wisdom shines,
And baffles satan's deep designs;

Thy pow'r is sov'reign to falsil
The noblest counsels of thy will.

2 Dec.

(336)

PRAYER shall be made for him continually, and daily shall be be praised, Psal. lxxii. 15.

O a condescending king, who can always be approached ! who would not pray ? you say : O that my coldness and indifference would permit me to do it ! but are you not sensible of your wants and miseries ? is not this coldness and backwardness misery enough ? Therefore you ought also to pray, and pray most, when you are so dull and drowsy ; else it will never be better with you. Arise therefore and pray, the good spirit of God will assist you in it. ‘ Encouraged by the promises of a prayer hearing God (says Luther) and the special assistance of the holy Spirit in this work, we must even in the greatest conflicts not omit to resist the temptations of the devil. And tho’ we have sinned, not defer it long ; but pray directly and say : the Lord is merciful, and I am unworthy and unable to pray ; but alas ! what shall I do ? shall I wait till I am worthy and able ? O no, perhaps this time will never come ; for I am always a great, miserable sinner. A christian stands always in need of the Lord’s prayer, for since the sense and tenor of sin does not leave him, he can never leave off prayers.’ O Lord, grant that this continual fire may never be extinguished in my heart !

Arise, my soul, from deep distress,
And banish ev’ry fear ;

God calls thee to his throne of grace,
To spread thy sorrows there.

*It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful, 1 Cor. iv. 2.
you are not your own, chap. vi. 19.*

O Lord, I beseech thee, either to give me nothing, in case I should not be faithful; or whenever thou art pleased to bestow something upon me, grant me also with every good gift that more needful and excellent gift of faithfulness. Let my heart always be prepared before hand for a fit vessel, that I may never abuse and spoil my goods, but always with fear and humbleness preserve and apply them thus, that I may receive more and more. Make me also faithful in mine ordinary call, that I may be duly mindful of all my duties, and have them at heart in such a manner, as never to omit any thing, but hasten and be careful to have finished my day's work in due time: But that I may not be hurried away by the hasty and inordinate motions of my own spirit. I beseech thee to use me just as man uses his own hand, according to thy good pleasure; nay, work every thing in me and through me, as it seems proper to thee. And whenever thou hast done something for me and by me, that I may give glory to thee, and ascribe nothing to me, but what is deffective and sinful; since this is the only thing which I can call my own. Now, O Lord, grant that I may never rob thee of thine honour, but be faithful in every thing and especially in humility; since the worm of pride spoils the most excellent fruits.

My faithful Saviour and my God,
Let grace my sinful heart renew;

Y Wash my offences in thy blood,
And make me true and faithful too.

MINE eyes are ever towards the Lord: for he shall pluck my feet out of the net, Ps. xxv. 15. Happy is the man that feareth alway, Prov. xxviii. 14.

O how long can some enemies hide themselves with their nets before our eyes and draw us in all on a sudden. It is unspeakable how cunning and powerful our enemies are, how they lay in wait everywhere, that in all places and at all times we are surrounded, as it were, with many cruel murderers of souls. Blessed is he, that keeps clear from self-confidence, but rather fearing always says within himself, as soon as he awakes in the morning: who knows what temptations I can meet with to-day; perhaps by the first step, when I rise, my feet may be entangled into dangerous snares and nets. And as self-confidence always will, but true confidence in thee, O Lord, never shall be ashamed, Rom. ix. 33. Grant, I beseech thee, that distrustful myself I may fully put my trust on thee, watching evermore in all things, and looking cautiously in all places about me, where there is any fear of danger. Whatever I am about to do or to speak, let me first look upon, and converse with thee, that thus keeping always close to thee, I may be preserved against the power and craft of mine enemies, as in a stronghold, and confidently say according to thy own pattern given, Psal. xvi. 8. 'I have set the Lord before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

God is my portion and my joy;
His counsels are my light:
He gives me sweet advice by day,
And gentle hints by night,

My soul would all her thoughts approve
To his all-seeing eye;
Not death nor hell my hope shall move
While such a friend is nigh.

5 Dec.

(339)

MY Father works hitherto, and I work (as also the holy Spirit),
John v. 17.

O my poor soul, shou'd the blessed Trinity not be able to destroy the works of the devil and fulfil his good-will in thee? O! yes, he works both *to will and to do*; and that very thing which is above your own power he works, and nothing else. If you can do little, he works much; if nothing at all, so much the better, then he works all: For he is our All, since we are nothing and can do nothing. And happy are we that we can have him for our assistant in all things, and that the children of God are not required to direct their own steps, but shall be led by their heavenly Father. Now, O Lord, since by the will, guidings and workings of my own heart I throw only so many hindrances and blocks in my way; grant, I beseech thee, that in true dependance on thee, I may venture every thing, and despairing of my own sufficiency, may always abide in thee, draw all necessary strength from thee by prayer and bring forth many good fruits which last to eternity. For the power in me being an eternal power; thy work, weak as it seems now, will also last eternally, that none shall be able to destroy it.

Thy counsels, Lord, shall guide my feet	What if the springs of life were broke,
Thro' this dark wilderness;	And flesh and heart should faint,
Thine hand conduct me near thy seat,	God is my soul's eternal rock,
To dwell before thy face.	Y 2 The strength of ev'ry saint,

6 Dec.

(340)

DRAW nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you, James iv. 7, 8. And thus the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, chap. v. 16.

O my dear soul, draw nigh to God in prayer, and he will draw nigh to thee; be instant in it, and the devil cannot stand against thee: for the incense of prayer chafes all devils, as the smoke the bees, works wonderful, great things, and will make possible what seemed most impossible. God having given thee many things by thy prayers already, this is a great encouragement to hope also for that which thou lackest yet. Therefore pray only confidently and you shall receive evermore; for unbelief is the only reason that God cannot work wonders for us.

My God, I bow before thy feet,
When shall my soul get near thy seat?
When shall I see thy glorious face,
With mingled majesty and grace?
How should I love thee and adore.
With hopes and joys unknown before!
And bid this trifling world be gone,
Nor tease my heart so near thy throne!

Creatures with all their charms should fly,
The presence of a God so nigh:
My darling sins should loose their name,
And grow my hatred and my shame.
My soul shall pour out all her cares,
In flowing words or flowing tears;
Thy smiles would ease my sharpest pain,
Nor shall I seek my God in vain.

THERE is none good, but one; that is God, Matth. xix. 17. But, even imagination of the thoughts of our hearts is only evil continually, Gen. vi. 5.

A christian feeling continually the vile corruption of his heart with grief, thinks himself to be the least of all the saints; but a hypocrite having little sense of sin, takes himself to be better than others. Therefore we cannot be said to have truly repented, except we have an experimental knowledge of there being no good in us, no, not so much as one drop of blood. Nay, when we are even come to this and are converted, we must not presumptuously imagine to have got over all the mountains; after many years, we may see such abominations, which we thought little of in the beginning. Consequently we have always reason to be afraid of our own hearts, and to depend intirely on free grace, like a poor penitent condemned malefactor, else the pharisee will soon lift up his head again. But he that is really convinced to be such a miserable lost sinner, as has no good in him by nature, pleading guilty in all things and seeking every thing freely in Christ, is actually partaker of all the merits of Christ, and can look upon himself as intirely justified in him. Now, O Lord, grant that I may patiently know and cleanse myself more and more; and tho' I cannot effect it by my own power; yet my comfort is, that thou art good alone, and art willing and able to work in me all that which is good.

Nature has all its glories lost,

When brought before thy throne;

No flesh shall in thy presence boast,

Y 3 Put in the Lord alone.

8 Dec.

(342)

TAKE *this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages*, Exod. ii. 9.

As Moses was ordered to be saved by the most cruel enemy's daughter ; so satan himself, even when he meditates our destruction, must be a means of our life. See also *Mat. xii. 48. Who is my mother, &c. Isa. viii. 10. chap. ix. 6.* O Lord Jesus, thou being also a child born unto me, and I willing to receive thee as my Emanuel, I shall certainly have good wages, nay, even thou wilt be my shield and exceeding great reward, and defend me powerfully against all my enemies. O my dear Saviour, since thou art mine, all is mine, even thy Father, thy Spirit, and thy heavenly glory ; all accidents, all enemies must work for my good, and be instruments and ministers of my salvation. O that I may never fear any thing, but thinking directly, it is mine, may only make good use of every thing. Thus even the very worst, would turn to my greatest blessing, and without it perhaps I should want such a needful thing, as if a mill or a ship was destitute of wind and water.

My soul, survey thy happiness
If thou art found a child of grace ;
How richly is the gospel stor'd !
What joy the promises afford !
All things are new ; the gift of God ;
And purchas'd with our Saviour's blood :

While the good spirit shows us how
To use and to enjoy them too.
If peace and plenty crown my days,
They help me, Lord, to speake thy praise :
If bread of sorrows be my food,
These sorrows work my real good.

9 Dec.

(343)

*S*peaking unto yourselves in psalms and hymns, Eph. v. 19. Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns, Col. iii. 16. For, God recomended every one his neighbour, Sirach xvii. 15.

If we are obliged to promote the temporal good of our neighbour, how much more the spiritual, by edifying discourses. But how is it? the children of God, when somebody visits them, (says a certain divine) are sometimes troubled and know not what discourse to enter upon: at last they begin, if not intirely in vain, yet perhaps unprofitable discourses, or at least they suffer others to do it and are silent to it. I'll tell you, what I have done in such cases: I first prayed to God, saying: O good God, there I received a guest, and having nothing to set before and treat him with, I pray thee to give me the right bread for him; which the Lord was pleased to hear in such a gracious manner, that I could soon enter into an edifying discourse. And thus we keep our conscience clean, tho' perhaps the lips are frozen up. Some foolish philosophers, to the great offence of others, mock at divine things and even at prayers, as if natural reason and will was not corrupted and highly wanted to be prayed for. But it is fulfilled with them what St. Paul says, Rom. i. 23. What will become of these poor scoffers upon their dying bed, and at the day of judgment! O that they would take warning while it is time!

Now, if some proper hour appear:

Let none be over-aw'd;

But let the scoffing sinners hear,

Y 4 That we can speak to Gods

TELL his disciples and Peter (who was deeply fallen especially), Mark xvi. 7. If any man sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous - - - for the whole world, 1 Joh. ii. 1, 2. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, Heb. xi. 12.

Hast thou been slack, unfaithful, and fallen away, O poor soul, thou art not to make light of it: but why wilt thou continue in thy fallen condition any longer and complain? get thee up, and ask pardon of Christ: he is ready to forgive and receive thee again, like *Peter*, having received gifts for the rebellious. Delay not to lay hold of thy ransom, which is greater than all the sins of the world. considering that it is paid even for this very sin, whose remission is purchased by it already and applied to thee in baptism. Therefore be not discouraged, much less suffer the temptation of drawing back to the world to prevail upon you. The Lord even now reaches forth his hands to thee anew by this very word; come, lift thyself up at it, and be careful for the time to come, to be so much more cautious, humble and gentle towards others; for a christian's feet will slide, but only into humility.

Salvation! oh the joyful sound;
 'Tis pleasure to my ears;
 A sov'reign balm for ev'ry wound,
 A cordial for my fears.

Bury'd in sorrow and in sin,
 At hell's dark door I lay;
 But I arise, by grace divine,
 To see a heav'nly day.

11 Dec.

(345)

BEHOLD we come unto thee, Jere. iii. 22. (and) *I will come unto you,* John xiv. 18. A lively representation of this happy meeting see Luke xix. 4, 5, 6. *Zaccheus ran - - - and Christ said unto him, Make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house.*

O my dear Saviour, since I come to thee and thou to me, we shall certainly meet one another. Who will oppose and obstruct it? Devil and sin? O no! this wall of separation is pulled down. 'Christ says, (as Luther observes) 'come unto me, I am not an angry judge, but a 'loving Mediator between God and thy frightened conscience; keep 'to me and fear not wrath. Why, therefore I sit here, that, believing 'in me to make intercession for thee with God, no wrath or disgrace 'can befall thee. Should wrath and punishment come upon thee, it 'must first come upon me; which is quite impossible, since he is the dear 'Son of God, in whom dwells all the fulness of grace, and the Father 'looking upon him, his wrath must vanish away, and every thing in 'heaven and earth be changed into smiles of love and grace, Eph. i. 6.' Dangers and conflicts being hot, God hastens with his assistance. At other times he tarries, and the work of our whole renovation goes on by little and little, that improving in the exercise of patience and faith, we may also bear with others, and learn not only to quicken our diligence, but also to wait for him.

In thine own ways, O God of love,
We wait the visits of thy grace;

Our souls desire is to thy name,
And the remembrance of thy face,

SINCE I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all, Exod. v. 23.

At the very time, when God is about to deliver us from the power of a particular sin or weakness, he suffers it most to be stirred up and felt, that we imagine perhaps to have never been so wicked and oppressed before. But thus out of darkness, he brings forth light; of unbelief, faith; of pride, humility, &c. 'For God (as Luther observes) 'makes none a great saint, except he has first made him a great 'sinner.' Sin must first appear so great and sinful, that we heartily plead guilty of damnation, Rom. vii. 13. humbly begging pardon, and renouncing all self-righteousness, and strength, and that we not only receive Christ for our only righteousness, but also abide in him, continually drawing all necessary strength from him for sanctification. This is the only method of bruising the head of sin. Thus I build not the comfort of pardon upon my victory, but the victory upon my pardon. I strive, not thinking, that I shall have only remission of sin, when I conquer it, but I seek first remission, and believe, that it is forgiven. Being assured of this, I strive in faith against sins forgiven already, as one who is not only accepted with God through Christ, but even in league and covenant with him against all our enemies. And by these means I have peace, courage, strength and victory.

O may thy pard'ning grace be nigh,
Lest we should faint, despair and die!

Thus shall our better thoughts approve
The methods of thy wondrous love.

13 Dec.

(347)

*R*eturn ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings, Jer. iii. 22. See also Luke xv. 20. *When he was yet a great way off.*

Hear ye therefore the voice of thy loving Father and Shepherd, O thou backsliding child and lost sheep, crying earnestly: *Return, Return.* Do not run on in the broad way with the world any longer. Are you not tired yet of the husks of the world? Do you feel no troubles in the soul? shall not these drive thee to God? Lo! thy Father and shepherd seeks thee. He is gone forth to call and meet thee already. He will receive thee willingly and joyfully. Come only weeping and praying as the prodigal son, he will freely forgive thee all, tho' thou hadst sinned ever so much. He is also able to heal and correct the most desperate corruptions of thy heart. He can deliver thee from the very jaws of he'll and devil. Nay, if thou even wast possessed with more than seven devils, he can still cast them out. Begin only to call upon him earnestly in prayer, and poor and wretched as thou art, come to him as the physician of thy Soul; for the physician and the sick, the rich and the poor, are the best match for one another. He healeth ALL our diseases, and can make possible, what seems most impossible to thee.

Come, all ye vilest sinners, come,
He'll form your souls anew;

His gospel and his heart has room
For rebels, such as you.

14 Dec.

(348)

WATCH ye therefore and pray always, Luke xxi 36. *Let us lay aside every weight and the sin, Heb. xii. 1.*

The hearts of men are like unto clocks, who only want to be wound up once a day ; O no ! the dulness and distraction is too great, which so easily besets us. We must lift them many times a day, yea, watch continually to lay aside every weight. Our going out and going in, nay all things, even the very least, we must do with prayer ; always strictly examining what is the will of the Lord, else, if they are done after our own will, they do not tend to the glory of God, and cannot be attended with his blessing. But if we earnestly strive against our own will in prayer, willingly suffering every hour what the Lord thinks proper to lay upon us, and will be ruled by his hints and slight strokes of his rod, many heavy afflictions, scourges and whips can be avoided ; for the burthens, which we bring upon ourselves by our own will and impatience, are always the heaviest. A christian has daily his proper burden and affliction, like a clock its weights, by which the flesh is kept under, that the spirit can raise up. Therefore when any thing comes cross, he looks upon it, as its weights for the day, to stir him up to the exercise of prayer and meditation of the word of God. O Lord, grant that I may always bear thy easy yoke, and be never the cause of my distress and dulness.

Wait on the Lord, ye trembling saints, He'll raise your spirit when it faints,
And keep your courage up ; And far exceed your hope.

15 Dec.

(349)

GIVE an account of thy stewardship, Luke xvi. 22.

O Lord! how have I wasted my time, goods and faculties!
O pardon me for thine infinite mercy's sake, blot out my debt by thy blood, and grant that keeping henceforth daily and hourly a good account, and acting more prudent, faithful and diligent, my reckoning may not be too foul at last. But preserve me also from all needless cares; since the care where to get something is not the stewards business, but only to husband every thing faithfully. Therefore Luther often prayed:
'Teach me. O Lord, and give me wisdom and grace to govern my
'house, and manage all my affairs rightly. Be thou the principal governor and father of my family, I will be nothing but thy servant;
'direct me only in all things, that I may not suffer or do any harm.'
He that does not expostulate with God, but justifying him, accuses himself to be guilty in all things, even in his best performances, will be justified again by him, through the righteousness of his dear Son. And being thus adopted of God, he is ready and willing to be governed and directed by him in all things as a child.

That awful day will surely come,
Th'appointed hour makes haste,
When I must stand before my judge,
And pass the solemn test.

Thou lovely chief of all my joys,
Thou sov'reign of my heart!
How could I bear to hear the voice,
Pronounce the sound, DEPART?

E *Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith, 2 Cor. xiii. 5.*

Many would be converted and become believers, if they did not presumptuously pretend to it, thinking they were no heathens, but had faith already. For such as have actually faith, often doubt, whether they had any, or not; and those that are without, imagine, they had enough. But faith is only wrought in the souls of those, who are deeply humbled by a thorough conviction of the greatness and heinousness of their sins, confessing themselves not only with their lips, but with a true sense of their hearts, to be the chief of sinners, and looking upon themselves as the most unworthy of all creatures. Without this repentance we do not enter through the right gate, and our faith is a false imagination. For faith is the greatest and most difficult thing even to a child of God; it receives Christ into the heart and overcomes devil, world and all sins; which is not so easily done. Therefore, if the generality of people had true faith, nothing was easier than that: for, what can be easier than to conceive thoughts and imaginations of any thing? then there would be no need to pray for faith, to strive and examine ourselves; consequently these words were superfluous in the bible. For such a faith has every one, even the most wicked. But they deceive themselves, for faith is said to be the victory over the world. And if the first christians had need to examine themselves, how much more have we? therefore the best and safest way is, to pray earnestly for that faith, which has boldness and triumphs even in death.

O Lord, thy grace and power display,
Let guilt and death no longer reign:

Save me in thine appointed way,
Nor let my humble faith be vain.

17 Dec.

(351)

FOR thy name's sake lead me and guide me. Pull me out of the net, &c.
Psal. xxxi. 3—5. *When the ark set forward, Moses said: rise up Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee, flee before thee,* Numb. x. 35.

Every one having his own particular gift, has also his own particular enemies, who lay various nets and hinderances in his way. But as every body must clear the way for a king, when he travels, much more so our enemies, when the King of kings guides us and goes before us. Grant only, O Lord, that all my going and resting may be done at thy hints, Numb. iv. 17—23. Be gloriously pleased to go always before me, and to make room, that mine enemies may be scattered and fall into their own nets. For thou, who dwellest in heaven, laughest at all even mine inward spiritual enemies, and art willing and able to confound the greatest craft and power even of the most inveterate and dangerous. And 'since thou enlightenest my darkness, and art a buckler to all 'those that trust in thee, and not only teachest my hands to war; but 'even fightest for me as the God of my covenant,' Psal. xviii. 28—36; I shall surely come off more than conqueror.

Great God, preserve my conscience clean,
Wash me from guilt, subdue my sin;
Thy love shall guard me from surprize,
Tho' threat'ning dangers round me rise.

My faith would seize some promise, Lord;
There's pow'r and safety in thy word:
Not all that earth and hell can say,
Shall tempt, or drive my soul away.

18 Dec.

(352)

WATCH, (and be faithful every hour) *for ye know not, what hour your Lord doth come, Matth. xxiv. 42.*

A christian hath two watchful eyes ; with one he looks always upon himself as a sinner, with the other he looks upon Christ as being without sin in him. There things must be watched evermore, for as soon as we turn our eyes off and look upon others, or our own gifts, either pride or despair will follow ; both which is very dangerous in the last hour.

Death ! 'tis a melancholy day
To those that have no God,
When the poor soul is forc'd away
To seek her last abode.
In vain to heav'n she lifts her eyes ;
But guilt, a heavy chain,
Still drags her downward from the skies
To darkness, fire and pain.

Awake and mourn, ye heirs of hell,
Let stubborn sinners fear ;
You must be driv'n from earth, and dwell
A long **FOR EVER** there.
See how the pit gapes wide for you,
And flashes in your face ;
And thou, my soul, look downwards too,
And sing recov'ring grace.

WHAT wilt thou, queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom, Esther v. 3.

Dost thou want nothing, O poor soul? hast thou nothing to ask? O yes! you say, a great deal. Well then, draw near to thy gracious king and bridegroom without fear. Lo! he holds out his golden scepter to thee, saying: ask, only ask, not only the half, but my whole kingdom shall be granted, nay, I will give myself unto thee. O dear soul, pray and tell him every thing that is wanting, be it ever so great or ever so small. His loving kindness will hear even the least petition, nay, he will pretend to be ignorant of what thou dost not tell him. But whatever is poured out before him, is actually addressed and lodged in its proper place, and does not lie upon thy heart any longer, but upon his heart, which cannot rest, till you are relieved. And since you have experienced his assistance so often, in greater and lesser things, you may depend upon his being as willing and able now to help thee out of all troubles. We often imagine, we were willing and drawing him, but he was unwilling and refused our request: but it is not so; he rather draws us and desires our relief more than we do; for it is he that works even this willing mind.

Are those the happy persons here,
Who dwell the nearest to their God?
Has God invited sinners near?
And Jesus bought this grace with blood?

Go then, my soul, address the Son,
To lead thee near the Father's face;
Gaze on his glories yet unknown,
Z And taste the blessings of his grace.

20 Dec.

(354)

WHAT wilt thou, that I shall do unto thee? Luke xviii. 18.

O Lord, dost thou ask me also this question? O yes! well then, I answer: that I may see how gracious thou art, that knowing thy love in thy light, I may love thee again. This is the sum and substance of all my prayer; because thou requirest it so seriously of me, *1 Cor. xvi. 22.* But thou dost not require it as of myself, well knowing that I can do nothing: but signifiest only what I am to ask of thee, and what thou art willing to give and to work. For, *thou dost not require any thing, but what thou workest thyself; and workest every thing, what thou requirest.* Therefore, faith and love being required by thee; I require the same from thee again. Grant, O grant them to me, that I may return them to thee again. And since nothing is pleasing to thee, but what is thy own gift; I trust that thou wilt certainly hear and fulfil this my request. However as my salvation is not grounded on my own, but on thine and thy father's love and counsel to save me by free grace through thy merits; I go on covered all over with grace and pardon. This is treasure enough, by which my heart can be well satisfied.

He that can shake the worlds he made,
Or with his word, or with his rod.
His goodness how amazing great!
And what a condescending God!

Our sorrows and our tears we pour
Into the bosom of our God;
He hears us in the mournful hour,
And helps us t'bear the heavy load.

21 Dec.

(355)

*I*N returning and rest shall ye be saved. in quietness and confidence shall be your strength, Isa. xxx. 15. Suffer every thing what befalls thee, Sirach ii 4.

Christians must suffer patiently. This is their armour, God fighting for and assisting them. But when we are unwilling to suffer, going about to make complaints every where and to seek human comfort, or to rid ourselves, we neglect and lose the comfort and aid of the Lord, we are stirring up the wasp-nest of our unruly thoughts, and bring more troubles upon ourselves and others, nay, we are fighting against God, who thereby intends to cure our impatience, pride and anger. For the more we are peevish and wild, the more desperate is our disease, and consequently we have so much more need of such sharp but wholesome plaisters of afflictions, to mortify these wild passions of the flesh. Therefore we must not presume to tear them off, for fear of making the wounds and pains only worse. For he that will avoid one trouble, perhaps runs into ten others. Sometimes it is possible and easy to rid ourselves, but the he'p is not so glorious and blessed, as if we had waited for the help of the Lord,

Sure I must bear if I would reign;
Increase my courage, Lord!
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by thy word.

Must I be carry'd to the skies,
On flow'ry beds of ease;
While others suffer'd for the prize,
And sail'd through bloody seas?

Z 2

22 Dec.

(356)

Who loveth instruction, loves knowledge, but he that (self conceitedly) hates reproof, is brutish, Prov. xiii. 1. was he even a great philosopher.

Therefore we should take and make the best of the reproofs of others, tho' they were not without blemishes, and not be like thorns and briars, pricking and hurting those, that touch them. Nothing can be said so bad of us, which we have not the root of in our heart. And tho' we are convinced of and strive against our own weakness, yet it may not be so earnestly that we conquer. Therefore God comes to our assistance in a sharp reproof of others; for he knows how to use even the faults of others to our good. And if we receive every thing as from him alone, striving so much against this our frailty, that we may not be offensive to our neighbour any more, we certainly gain a great victory and blessing. But if we grow impatient and make many excuses, unwilling to put up any thing, we make evil worse and neglect the amendment of ourselves and others. O Lord, make us better and give patience.

How should the sons of Adam's race
Be pure before their God?
If he contend in righteousness
We fall beneath his rod.

To vindicate my words and thoughts
I'll make no more pretence;
Not one of all my thousand faults
Can bear a just defence.

23 Dec.

(357)

WHEN I am weak, then I am strong, 2 Cor. xii. 10. The Lord is my strength, Exod. xv. 2. In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence, Prov. xiv. 26.

The more we are sensible of our weakness, and despair of our own strength, the more boldness we can have in our confidence to God. Fear and distrust generally take their rise from self-confidence. ' A christian (as Luther observes) has always a true fear of God in his heart, thinking in all things, O Lord, that I may not displease thee ! for the right spirit is very faint-hearted towards God, but against tyrants and devils the Holy Ghost inspires him with courage, that he says : tho' I am a poor weak worm, yet I am strong ; the Lord being my strength, who can be so strong as to oppose him ? they do not fight against me, but against thee, O God. I am thy weakness, thou art my strength. The devil takes us to be weak, but in time of distress the Lord says, I am here. Then it is as with the worm on the hook, which the fish is going to swallow up, and thereby is caught. Thus God suffers us to be weak and faint, but he being hidden in us with his strength, preserves us, when the enemies rise to devour us, not knowing that their endeavour is to devour God, which they will never execute, by any means.

His pow'r the whole creation rules,
And on the starry skies
Sits smiling at the weak designs,
Which envious foes devise.

In vain the busy sons of hell
Still new distractions try,
Their souls shall pine with envious rage,
Z 3 And vex away and die

24 Dec.

(358)

HE that believes shall not make haste, Isa xxviii. 16. Lift up thy rod,
Exod. xiv. 16. *New trials, new blessings!*

What seems to oppose, nay, to destroy our faith most, must further and quicken it most. Faith is the most pleasant and important thing in the eyes of God, Jerem. v. 3. For he is exceeding willing to help us, but cannot do it, till he has first given us faith; since it is always said: *Thy faith has saved thee.* Therefore if you will have his assistance, believe only; for humble faith has the Lord as it would have him, and receives all things, *Matth. xv. 28.* Luther says: 'faith is a great miraculous thing, giving such courage to a poor weak man, that he can say: If all the devils fall upon me, and all the emperors and kings, nay, heaven and earth opposed me: yet I am sure, that I shall be saved. But without faith, God can do no wonders and miracles for us. But such as believe, shall be saved, should even heaven and earth pass away; for he has promised and said: He that believes, shall be saved; which word stands firmer than heaven and earth, since thereby he has created all things, consequently he will and it is fit, we should depend and trust upon that, tho' heaven and earth and all the stars and elements were against us. Taking therefore the word in our hands and fighting resolutely with it against our enemies, we shall surely beat them down and break thro' all assaults and oppositions.

His sov'reign pow'r what mortal knows?
If he commands, who dares oppose?

With strength he girds himself around,
And treads the rebels to the ground.

25 Dec.

(359)

IF any man will come after me, let him deny himself. St. Luke ix 23.

Doing this all the rest will go easy; if we know, that we are nothing, are unworthy of every thing, and have nothing of our own, we can loose nothing. We have no property, since we are but stewards of the Lord. We have no honour or shame of our own, after the manner of the world: this being our only honour, if God is glorified, and our only shame, if he is dishonoured by us. The glory of God we must have at heart, and in his cause be like lions, but in our own cause, like lambs. Therefore when we are crossed in things which do not concern the glory of God and the real good of our neighbour, but our own interest, and are unwilling to suffer something, we shall miscarry and be involved into greater troubles. But denying ourselves, we shall loose only a good deal of vexation, and instead of this receive Christ, with all his spiritual and temporal blessings, as far as we want them, which alone can make us chearful and happy. But whosoever desires to please the world in its taste, 'with his singularities,' seeking himself and his own glory, cannot be a follower of Christ in this, and have boldness towards God. And how will it be with them in the hour of death and judgement? here the learned may try themselves also; whom do they please? God or the world?

Deny thyself and take the cross,
Is the Redeemer's great command, Z 4

Nature must count her glory dross,
If she will gain the heav'nly land.

26 Dec.

(360)

HOW long do ye halt between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him, 1 Kings xviii. 21. For as it was your mind to go astray from God: so being returned, seek him ten times more, Baruch iv. 28.

Many pretend to be friends to the children of God and to the children of this world at once, and take it to be a great wisdom: but such the Lord catches in their wisdom, and very often puts them to open shame before the world. O! poor soul, how long will you divide your soul? how long will you tarry to surrender yourself intirely up to God, without exception? if you would be saved, your change must be entire and absolute, you must be made spiritual and heavenly minded. But the longer you neglect this and bargain with God, the harder the work of conversion will go: and how soon may death overtake you? what can the world profit you then? but with Christ you would be a thousand times more happy in life and in death. Hasten therefore and bargain no longer with God, he will have your whole heart, saying: 'Give me thy heart, thy whole heart,' or nothing at all. And he that does not give up his all to him, can never come to rest.

No longer will I ask the love
Of worldly friendship more;
The happiness that I approve
Is not within its power.

Jesus, my God! I know his name,
His name is all my trust;
Nor will he put my soul to shame,
Nor let my hope be lost.

27 Dec.

(361)

HOW often would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not! Matth. xviii. 37. For, who has believed our report; Isa. liii. 1.

How often does God allure thee by his word and many agreeable and disagreeable providences, but thou dost not feel it, or hast a thousand excuses, tho' before God they are all vain and will stand thee in no stead. The true reason is: because thou wilt not, therefore thou canst not. Thou dost not follow the word of God; hence comes that great darkness and offence at God and his children. O Lord, cast out that evil spirit of slandering and lying, that I may never be offended at thee, but be intirely reconciled to all thy ways, that my heart may be won over to thee and stirred up to incessant thanksgiving and praise. O good Lord, deliver me from all the powers of darkness, and suffer nothing to abide in me, which can in any wise hurt me. Amen.

O that thy statutes ev'ry hour
Might dwell upon my mind!
Thence I derive a quick'ning pow'r,
And daily peace I find.
To meditate thy precepts, Lord,
Shall be my sweet employ;
My soul shall ne'er forget thy word,
Thy word is all my joy.

How would I run in thy commands,
If thou my heart discharge
From sin and satan's hateful chains,
And set my feet at large!
Depart from me, ye wicked race,
Whose hands and hearts are ill:
I love my God, I love his ways,
And must obey his will.

28 Dec.

(362)

L *About not for the meat that perishes, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, St. John vi. 27. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day, cap. ix. 4. For, the time is short, 1 Cor. vii. 29.*

There is much labouring, writing and doing, but it is only to get the name of a great learned man; which does not bring any fruit and reward for eternity. O Lord, how soon is my life at a period? how little, or nothing good have I worked? O how much have I wasted of my time and strength already, only in vain thoughts; and what shall I say of all the unprofitable, nay, sinful words and works? O Lord, I cannot answer thee one of a thousand. I am ashamed and humbled in thy sight. Pardon, pardon me, O Lord, and grant that henceforth I may redeem my time and strength better, and bestow every part of them upon the most important and useful things, especially upon prayers for myself and others. Nay, let me spend all my hours, as it were, with prayers, and thus send them before me into eternity, that I may reap a blessed fruit of every hour in the world to come. O! therefore, set eternity in all things before my eyes as my only mark.

Our days, alas, our mortal days;
Are short, and wretched too;
Evil and few, the patriarch says,
And well the patriarch knew.

6 JU 62

Let heav'nly love prepare my soul,
And call her to the skies,
Where years of long salvation roll,
And glory never dies.

29 Dec.

(363)

WE being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another, Rom. xii. 5.

O the blessed communion of saints! one member has the benefit of all other members gifts, prayers and ministrations. One prays for all, and all pray for one. What one has, the other enjoys also. It may be truly said of them: *It is all yours.* There is no envy, no haughtiness, no strife, or harm; for why should I envy that which is my own? why should I despise that, which serves for my necessary assistance? and why should I strive against, and hurt him, whose hurt is my own? is there any strife or collision between the members of our natural body? by no means, they all serve, help and assist one another, and if one be injured and suffers, all the rest, as it were, run to its relief, and are neither tired or angry, if the healing does not follow immediately. O Lord, unite us all into such a communion and general sympathy, and stop all open and subtle divisions amongst our members, who pretend to something extraordinary and to be wise above the rest. Restrain that mean sectarian and self-conceited spirit of the world, granting true humility to all, then we shall live in a solid union and uninterrupted harmony.

O glorious portion of the saints!

Let love suppress our sore complaints,

And tune our hearts and tongues to sing,

All glory to our sov'reign King.

30 Dec.

(364)

EXCEPT the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it,
Psal. cxxvii. 1.

Luther on these words says: ' Let the Lord build and manage the
• house ; meddle not with his work ; it is his part and not thine own
• to take care of it : therefore leave the care to him that is the supreme
• landlord and husbandman. Is there much wanted to furnish and pro-
• vide for a house ; the Lord is greater than a house. He that fills
• heaven and earth, will certainly be able to fill a house. No wonder
• that there is great want in a house, if God is not the governor in it !
• because thou dost not see him that is to fill the house, surely all the
• corners must seem to be empty : but looking upon him, thou wouldest
• never observe one corner to be empty, every one would seem to be
• full, and is really full ; If it is not, the fault is only in thy eye, as it
• is in a blind man, who cannot see the sun. To him that sees rightly,
• the Lord changes the word, and says not, there goes much into a house
• but there goes much out of it.' O Lord, give only faith, love and knowledge of thy will
that I may not only expect all things confidently from thy hand, since a labourer is worthy
of his hire ; but also manage every thing afterwards as a faithful steward to such purposes
thou hast granted it for, be it for my own use, or the use of others, and that I may never
be saving to thy dishonour : ' for my purse is thine, and consequently rich enough.'
'Tis all in vain, till God has blest ; Children and friends are blessing too,
He can make rich, yet give us rest : If God our sov'reign make them so.

31 Dec.

(365)

I*N those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none, Jer. l. 20. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more, chap. xxxi. 34*

I blush, O Lord, when I remember my sins and consider that thy pure eyes have seen them all ; but thou hast promised not only to pardon and not to be angry at or upbraid me for them, as men do ; but even to forget every thing intirely, as if thou didst not know, what has passed in the sinful years of my life, and to look upon me, in time and eternity, as a dear child who had never done any thing amiss : since thou dost not see any sin, nor even a spot or wrinkle in me, but only thy dear Son, and his blood, consequently nothing but what is worthy of thy love. Therefore thou lovest me more than I love myself ; for the love I bear myself, is but human : thou lovest me as thou doest thine own Son, *John xvii. 16.* and since this is a divine, perfect and eternal love ; I must needs enjoy the same, being in him, and one with him, his member, his bride and very child. If it is possible for thee to hate him, then thou canst hate me also ; but this can never be : since sin, which only deserves to be hated, is perfectly and eternally put away.

Jesus, we bless thy Father's name ;
Thy God and ours are both the same :
What heav'nly blessings from his throne
Flow down to sinners thro' his Son.

With Christ our Lord we share our part
In the affections of his heart ;
Nor shall our souls be thence remov'd,
'Till he forgets his first belov'd,

Additional page for the *Leap-Year*, on the 29th of Febr.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, Psal.
xxxii. 1.

We have all need of learning and praying the fifth petition of the Lord's prayer better and better; for we still feel sin, nay, when it is best with us we have the most tender feeling of sin; but when we draw back, we become blind to ourselves. To do sin, is wrong; but to feel sin, and run to the physician with it, is good. *Luther* says; 'To be sensible of sin is a good sign, therefore we are not to despair, but to thank God heartily for it. For as long as a christian lives in the flesh, sin remains in him; but since he is protected under the shadow of the wings of Christ, as a chicken under the wings of a hen, and is covered with that large extensive *heaven*, whose name is forgiveness of sin, the Lord does not lay the remaining sins to his charge.' Now, O Lord, grant that I may look, beyond all what is good and bad, upon thee alone, how thou coverest all my sin; and let me not only always live and rest in the remission of sin as mine element; but also die in it at last.

Justice upon a dreadful throne

Maintains the rights of God,

While mercy sends her pardons down,

Bought with a Saviour's blood.

6 JU 62

Now to my soul, immortal King,

Speak some forgiving word;

Then 'twill be double joy to sing

The glories of my Lord.